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"I come to lay the burden down
That so oppresseth me"

SCRUPLES:
WORDS OF CONSOLATION

(FOURTH EDITION)

By
Rev. PATRICK J. GEARON
O.C.C., D.D., B.A.

With a Letter from
His Holiness Pope Pius XI
and an Appreciation by J. B. Magennis
M.B., B.Ch., B.A.O., Physician
to St. Vincent's Hospital,
Dublin, etc.

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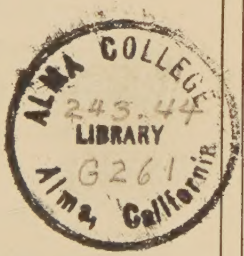

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THIS UNPRETENTIOUS TREATISE
ON SCRUPLES
IS LAID
WITH THE MOST TENDER DEVOTION
AND
THE MOST HUMBLE CONFIDENCE
AT THE FEET OF
THE GENTLE, SILENT, ST. JOSEPH,
CHASTE SPOUSE OF OUR LADY,
AND FOSTER-FATHER OF OUR LORD,
AND ALSO AT THE FEET OF
LITTLE TERESA OF THE CHILD JESUS,
THAT TENDER FLOWER,
WHICH BLOSSOMED ON THE TREE OF CARMEL,
IN GRATEFUL, NEVER-DYING GRATITUDE,
FOR CONTINUAL FAVOURS
GRANTED TO THOSE RECOMMENDED
TO THEIR CARE,
AND A PROMPT, EFFECTUAL SUPPORT
IN TIMES OF SPECIAL TRIAL.

This remarkable work is appearing

In French	under the title of	**"Consolation pour les Scrupuleux"**
„ Italian	„	**"Consolazione per gli Scrupolosi"**
„ Spanish	„	**"Consolacion para los Escrupulosos"**
„ German	„	**"Trost für die Gewissenhafte"**
„ Dutch	„	**"Troost voor Scrupuleuzen"**

LETTER FROM HIS HOLINESS, POPE PIUS XI.

DAL VATICANO,
March 18th, 1926

Segreteria di Stato
di Sua Santitá.

DEAR REV. FATHER,

I have the pleasing duty of informing Your Reverence that the Holy Father has appreciated your kind thought of presenting Him a copy of your work—**"Scrupies: Words of Consolation."**

His Holiness thanks you for this testimony of filial devotion and from His heart imparts to you, as augury of heavenly favours, the Apostolic Benediction.

Availing of this occasion to assure you of my sincere personal esteem,

Your Reverence's faithful
Servant in Christ,
P. CARD. GASPARRI

Rev. Patrick J. Gearon, O.C.C.,
Convent of the Calced Carmelite Fathers,
Dublin.

APPRECIATION

BY

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PHYSICIAN TO ST. VINCENT'S HOSPITAL, DUBLIN, ETC.

The neuroses have become to-day a subject of universal discussion. Neurasthenia, Psychasthenia, Hysteria, Scrupulosity, Psycho-analysis, Psycho-therapy are bug-bears with many. We welcome indeed—and how much more must the poor sufferers of Scrupulosity welcome!—such a definite, concise view and analysis of Scruples as Father Gearon gives us in his "Words of Consolation."

To those accustomed to treat Psychasthenia in the medical sphere, the salient fact gleaned from experience is that no so-called scientific methods of psycho-analysis and psycho-therapy promise any hope of success unless the law of human sympathy is observed. To treat the neuroses from a text-book is infantile. Each case must be individually analysed. To win the confidence of the sufferer is the

first essential. To win this by sympathetic understanding, by making him feel you can look through those "black glasses" with him, by gaining his complete trust and then insisting on his complete surrender to your directions—this is the only successful method of diagnosis and treatment. Confidence will lead to obedience. Obedience will lead to cure. If the sufferer have not confidence in him to whom he applies for succour, he had better immediately choose another guide whom he will trust and obey.

The author makes the scrupulous feel he is on their side, that he is capable of entering with them into their troubles, but that he will exact in return their complete surrender to his advice. Fathering these poor, fearsome, anguished souls—so often misunderstood, so often discouraged, so often regarded as *malades imaginaires*—in his arms, Father Gearon leads them to gaze with childlike simplicity and confidence on the God of Love. The Beauty of the Great Truth thrills them with wonder and fills them with peace.

FOREWORD

In his endeavour to present the mind of the scrupulous on the spiritual difficulties which beset their path, the present writer feels that some explanation is due for thinking that any field remained for the additional labours of an enquirer.

What often retards the cure of the scrupulous is, in the author's opinion, not so much a weakness in their obedience, as the force of considerations which are urged against their submitting to authority. They would have no hesitation about carrying out the injunctions placed upon them, but for the apparent obstacles lying across their paths, obstacles which, whatever their logical cogency, are abundantly sufficient to mar their progress—and all this in cases where there are so many inducements to listen to authority.

The author has a profound misgiving about the fairness of many in the court of scruples—a misgiving founded on his sense of the misconceptions concerning scrupulosity which generally preoccupy the Catholic mind.

The scrupulous, it is the present writer's belief, have a claim on us to be protected in their good intentions against the false charges, mistakes and ignorance of their friends or of the world, against the colossal influence exerted on their minds by the real spiritual difficulties surrounding them like the coils of a serpent.

As regards those who honour him by reading this treatise, he would express a hope that he may not be supposed therein to assume a controversial attitude or a forwardness or rashness in dealing with this spiritual malady. He wishes to investigate the matter philosophically and to come to results which all sensible men will

perceive to be just and true. Few desire to grasp more clearly the sacredness and the delicacy of treating spiritual maladies than he who has taken the pains to write the following pages; few shrink more sensitively from inaccuracies in statement or in reasoning.

It will be the chief object, then, of the present undertaking to consider why, in matter of fact, the scrupulous fail to obey, or are at least, submissive with reluctance

To clear away from the path of the enquirer objections to obedience, is to help on his cure by giving room for the due and efficacious operation of divine grace.

In "WORDS OF CONSOLATION," the writer has primarily endeavoured to prescribe for readers who are afflicted with the malady under consideration. There is, however, another class to whom the volume may be of service. It may, he thinks, prove sometimes useful to those whose special office is

to guide souls. For the convenience of such readers he has taken care to deal with viewpoints other than his own, under the form of objections.

The author has, besides, to apologise for making what may be deemed countless repetitions. If anywhere he has been led to do so, it has been in cases where he regarded it as necessary to enforce certain passages.

It would seem that "The Little Flower" has taken the book under her protection. The launching of the little work was apparently a Rose from Heaven. It was immediately after a Novena to this Flower of Carmel for monetary assistance that a kind benefactor came along and, unpetitioned, offered to finance the printing of the First Edition. Those who derive any benefit from the volume should remember him in their prayers.

"The Little Flower" herself during life had a period of Scruples. We quote her

own words from *L'Histoire d'une âme*: "It was during the retreat before my second Communion that I was attacked by the terrible disease of Scruples. One must have passed through this martyrdom to understand it. It would be quite impossible for me to tell you what I suffered for nearly two years. All my thoughts and actions even the simplest, were a source of trouble and anguish to me. As soon as I had unburdened myself (to Marie) I felt a momentary peace, but it passed like a flash, and my martyrdom began again."

And lastly, the present writer earnestly begs a prayer that he may be blessed in whatever he attempts, however poorly, for God's honour and the consolation of the afflicted.

P. J. G., O.C.C.

Feast of St. Joseph,
March 19th, 1921.

PREFACE TO FOURTH EDITION

The appearance of the Fourth Edition speaks for itself. It is slightly enlarged.

The scrupulous are a class unto themselves. The mention of a doubt in Confession removes the worry, but it aggravates a scruple. Again, although the scrupulous may have no difficulty with their ordinary prayers, yet the recital of even a Hail Mary imposed as a penance could be a source of torture to them.

Verily we may liken the condition of the scrupulous to that of a man suffering from hallucinations in the matter of sight. In normal vision the eyes are a camera receiving pictures from outside. In hallucinations we have a reverse process, the eyes becoming, as it were, a magic lantern throwing out pictures. These pictures are from a diseased imagination.

P. J. G., O.C.C.

Feast of St. Joseph,
March, 1933

AUTHOR'S PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION

The First Edition of the present little work was published in Australia where the writer was engaged in the Master's vineyard under the Southern Cross.

Were the author in search of secular reward for the attempts he has made to help the scrupulous, he could not desire anything more complete, more welcome than the praise which has been so kindly bestowed by the Press in general, by Spiritual Directors, and by the scrupulous themselves.

There is, from the nature of the case, so much imperfection in all literary productions, and so much variety of opinion in any large circle of readers that, ere committing his thoughts to paper, the

present writer naturally felt a great trepidation lest he should fail in prudence, or err in statement of facts, or be careless in language.

To what positive praise his little book was entitled, it was for others to decide. And, therefore, when Spiritual Directors, when the afflicted themselves come forward and tell the writer that what he has published has been of real service to them, it is, it cannot be denied, a reassurance and gratification to him to receive such testimony in his favour.

It was the chief object of the writer to suggest thoughts which, in God's good time, would quietly bear fruit in the minds of the scrupulous. And the words of thanksgiving both spoken and written by those who had trod the thorny path, showed that the publication was none too soon.

For many a sufferer the night had been dark and the road lonely, with few to cheer, and fewer still to succour; and the afflicted

assured the writer that nothing but good would come from his work, for it was a veritable pen-picture of their own state.

The words of encouragement and thanksgiving from the scrupulous came with an additional charm, the promise of many a fervent prayer for the wide circulation of the book—a circulation so wide, that eventually it would reach the sufferers in all corners of the globe.

As was to be expected, there was also comment anything but favourable. The amount of advice the little book brought beggars description.

There were those who thought the picture of the sufferings over-drawn; but others—and these had been tried in the fire of tribulation—pronounced it strictly true to life.

There were some who saw little value in the section "Viewpoints Other than Ours," and in the lengthy treatment of "Private Revelations." But, singular to

relate, others—and they were all of that class for whom the book was primarily written—pronounced these sections as being of excellent worth.

But nothing can undo the fact that, in general, the book has been kindly received; and it would be difficult to find words which would fitly respond to so very considerate and friendly a welcome—a welcome which was the best reward, short of supernatural, for much anxiety in the hour of preparation.

Seeing that some readers have erroneously concluded that the present writer was once a victim of the malady under consideration, the author would have it clearly understood that his treatment is the result of his professional experience of others.

The writer could not see eye to eye with the traditional viewpoint with regard to the scrupulous. Anxiety to " raze out the written troubles of the brain " led him to investigate for himself.

The presence of the "black" or "clouded glasses" in the case of the scrupulous being firmly established, the author put himself in the dual capacity of patient and doctor, arguing for and against himself. As a result, he presents what is now regarded as a pen-picture of the workings of the scrupulous mind. Home-made remedies were applied, with unqualified success, to typical cases. Since the key opened the lock, it was useless to try to prove its inefficiency in that regard.

The author must not pass over in silence those who, with unlooked for and wonderful goodness, have endeavoured to spread his viewpoints by giving them form in other tongues. A German translation was undertaken by a member of the Society of Mary. A Spanish version is in the hands of the Salesian Fathers, whilst only a month has elapsed since word came from the French Benedictines that they were

undertaking a translation into their mother tongue.

Last but not least in moment and in claim upon the author's gratitude is the wonderful sympathy in the work—sympathy of special force and effect—coming from Dr. J. B. Magennis, and Dr. J. J. Walsh of New York (he gave a Preface to the American edition published by Herder), to whose interest it is most difficult duly to respond.

P. J. GEARON, O.C.C.,

Feast of Our Lady
of Mount Carmel,
1925.

CARMELITE PRIORY,
WHITEFRIAR ST.,
DUBLIN.

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INTRODUCTION

Considering that scrupulosity is to be found in every quarter of the globe, that it has long been a malady confined not to a few, but affecting many, that it penetrates into all classes of the Catholic body, that it has afflicted intellects the most profound and the most refined, and considering, moreover, that the scrupulous are but too often scorned and ridiculed, that they lack popular sympathy, as being by nature unreasonable, ignorant, stubborn, with more failings than other men, the very types and emblems of laziness, stupidity, timidity, inexperience, intellectual fastidiousness, self-dependence, dread of present inconvenience, pride of reason, attachment to cherished notions, in fine, the very pattern of all that is intolerable—all this, then, justifies us in dealing with scruples as an obstacle to peace of mind, spiritual progress and physical health.

Many think it a paradox to say a word in their favour, and scrupulosity is often regarded as a title of reproach. There is an instinctive feeling of restlessness and discomposure when the word is mentioned, a specific feeling which no other word tends to excite—neuroses, tepidity, have not this spell. Denunciations are launched—the patient suffers secretly the while.

With many, the scrupulous patient is their Nazareth. "Can any good come out of Nazareth?" settles the question with them. Happy rather if they could be induced to follow in the footsteps of the earnest enquirer in the Gospel, who, after urging this objection, did not fail to obey the invitation it elicited, "Come and see." The malady when rightly understood, it is our belief, inspires compassion, and no one can read the subject matter of our treatise without rising up from the perusal, indisposed to renew the ridicule and scorn in which he previously indulged.

INTRODUCTION

Before anyone speaks too freely against the scrupulous, it is his primary duty to have a right understanding of the case. He should have a clear idea of what scrupulosity is, otherwise he will be like a civilian discussing military tactics, yet totally inexperienced in warfare.

Our aim is to meet the needs of a class of God's creatures verily eaten up by this spiritual trouble, to bring balm to their gaping wounds, to pour oil upon the troubled waters dashing up against their poor enfeebled minds, to calm somewhat for them life's sea, thus enabling them to guide their little barque across a liquid plain to the haven of eternal salvation. To this purpose our efforts are directed, and should we succeed in bringing comfort to one poor soul, how could we look with an unfavourable eye upon our undertaking, seeing that anything done for the Master, be it ever so little, is worth a life of labour and suffering?

CAUSES OF SCRUPULOSITY

Were we asked to trace this bitter stream of scruples to the fount from which it arises, we would but express the sentiments of theologians in regarding its origin as threefold—first, God; then, the devil; and, in the third place, the patient himself.

In discussing the first source, we are within the truth when maintaining that God's action in regard to the afflicted soul is somewhat negative in character. He withdraws that divine light which enables the sufferer to distinguish with clearness the marked difference between right and wrong.

In the second place, scruples come from the devil, who, stirring up fancies in the troubled mind and overclouding it with darkness, tosses the soul about like a barque on a tempestuous sea.

Brief must be our description of the third fount of this mental trouble, though an adequate investigation would result in the production of a treatise bearing on neuroses, psychasthenia, and the like nerve trouble.

Scruples may find their origin in the false idea of their duty many devout souls have. Making upon themselves demands far beyond their strength and God's holy designs, and framing an imaginary code as a guide to perfection, they end in robbing themselves of interior peace.

Scruples may make their appearance when a man sets before himself the colossal task of reforming his whole life.

The malady may also arise from a constitution delicate from birth, or from bodily weakness, the outcome, it may be, of inordinate study, or imprudent abridgment of sleep.

DEFINITION OF SCRUPULOSITY

Were we called upon to give the definition of scruples as laid down by theologians, we would offer as our reply, that a scruple is a groundless fear of having sinned grievously in an action which is perfectly lawful and praiseworthy.

From this definition it is evident that we must draw the line between the scrupulous and the tender conscience.

Not the Same as Tender Conscience

We lay stress on the word "groundless" to mark off the scrupulous mind from the timorous or tender conscience with which, through ill fortune, it is but too often identified.

The application of the term "scrupulous" to those of a tender conscience is a misnomer, and this is evident on the consideration of our definition. The tender or timorous conscience takes alarm at sin, real, not imaginary. It offers no welcome

to faults, however trivial, but on the contrary, flees as from the fangs of a serpent or the contact of some foul and loathsome disease, from dangers boldly and foolishly encountered by others.

---

*Different from the Hysterical Mind

We do not wish to take into consideration a certain type of sufferer, scrupulous, it is believed, in some things, but otherwise seemingly devoid of conscience. With this class we are not concerned, nor do we think it is in keeping with accuracy to designate them as "scrupulous" without

*Pages 155, 156 and 157, should be read before starting this section—"Different from the Hysterical Mind." It was absolutely necessary to write this section as a guidance to Spiritual Directors, but unfortunately it disturbed not a few cases of scruples. The truly hysterical would not be upset by it. Some scrupulous penitents have the unhappy custom of always drawing from spiritual advice some meaning detrimental to themselves. For instance, the mere mention of the possibility of offending God in this way or that, would be sufficient to give the firm conviction that sometime or other they had committed this or that sin; to say that there are people of this or that peculiarity would be sufficient to make them firmly believe they were of that class.

qualification, as we believe them best fitted to come under the category of hysterical, or, if we may coin a word,—"scrupulo-hysterical."

Bold as may seem our assertion, we trust we are within the truth when maintaining that many a genuine sufferer from scruples is open to harsh treatment, and our reasons for so doing are of anything but an obscure nature. The word "scrupulous" has become identified in popular belief with over anxiety in one sphere of no importance, accompanied by laxity to a corresponding degree in other things of real value.

In their anxiety to give attention to mere trifles, or to carry into execution some childish detail, the hysterical will not fail to pass over the fundamental duties of religion or of their state of life. For them the difference between the essential and that which is but accessory, does not exist.

We shall not discuss the treatment for hysterical subjects, and for this reason—

that it is not our concern; but if we give a few signs of the malady, it is in the hopes that the reader may easily detect it if occasion arises.*

Ever on the border-line between reason and madness, they pass with little or no warning from one extreme to the other, from the state of darkest melancholy to that of thrilling joy, from refinement to vulgarity, from love to hatred, from gentleness to violence. The object of their affections to-day, they will pursue to-morrow with hatred no less implacable than ungovernable.

An intolerable burden to all around them, they everywhere sow the seeds of discontent, making life unbearable; and all the more must we be on our guard,

*At present the doctors' views concerning hysteria change greatly from year to year. See in La Presse Médicale of July 25th, 1908, the accounts given of the meetings held in Paris by the Société de Neurologie, in May, 1908. They were unable to agree upon a definition of hysteria. A professor at the Sorbonne has laid down this proposition—"There is no phenomenon by which, when taken alone, the presence of hysteria can with certainty be determined."

seeing that in the intervals of peace, they suffer no sacrifice to impede them in the performance of acts of kindness. Exposing themselves to any privation, they will risk even life itself in the hope of assisting the needy. But medical science is not slow in asserting that this devotedness is nothing else than a kind of necessity, and that the patient is acting under an impulse the duration of which is to determine his line of conduct.

Hysterical patients are, indeed, notably eccentric. Gifted with the faculty of quick perception and a lively imagination, they offer unquestionable proof of ability, literary, poetic, no less than artistic. But though their undertakings are more or less brilliant, they are without any real value; and by reason of the irregular, unsustained nature of their occupations and the superficial character of their work, we are correct in maintaining that these patients under consideration never attain to any great

success. Even when these afflicted ones are of high intellectual attainments, their intelligence is, for the most part, defective. We do not find among them that sound common sense to be met with even in uncultured persons. There is ever some mental defect, a wandering imagination, for instance, or, it may be, a tendency to be too easily influenced. A man of intellect, though he be the victim of neurasthenia, will never be altogether hysterical.

We have on record cases of persons—hysterical, be it remembered—who, in search of alleviation of their mental trouble, do not hesitate to register all the scandals of the parish. Quite shorn of any tenderness of conscience they will hack to pieces friend as well as enemy. Ever complaining of not being understood, they contend that they are never thoroughly appreciated.

Regarding themselves of superior attain-

ments to all around, they find fault with everything. Unbridled in the practice of duplicity and scheming, they are ever plotting to mislead their friends. With a notable lack of affection, they show a complete indifference to anything not ministering to their love of self. That their benefactors should have to suffer, seems the most improbable of prospects; yet such is the case, and in confirmation of this statement we add that, though no one can find favour with them, it is for their best friends that their deepest frauds are reserved. But, let us add that, though making dupes of others around them, they often begin by deceiving themselves, because some little act of kindness or politeness, a smile, for instance, or a salute, will suffice to bring the idea that they are the objects of special admiration.

Strange as it may seem to those who do not understand them, they really believe their own view of things as clear as day

and every other view irrational and ludicrous.

Nothing brings before us more vividly the dangerous nature of this particular malady than the fact that some men of medical science refuse to undertake the direction of these patients.

As mentioned in an opening sentence of this section dealing with hysteria, we are not prescribing for its treatment; but we shall point out before concluding, that while some hysterical persons are irresponsible for their actions, others are more or less to be held accountable according as the impulse governing them varies in intensity; and, in consequence, though justly regarded as blame-worthy in many circumstances, their responsibility is somewhat diminished.

SIGNS OF SCRUPULOSITY

Having distinguished the scrupulous mind from the tender conscience, and passing over what might be designated as cases of hysteria, we shall now turn our attention to some of the signs of scrupulosity.

(1) A mark of scrupulosity is the persistence in maintaining that the matter submitted to the confessor is a mortal sin, in spite of his assurance to the contrary.

(2) It reveals its presence, when, although advice has been sought on some point of doubt, the answers have left the penitent as disturbed as he was prior to the investigation, if not more so.

(3) When, raking up past confessions, the penitent has a burning desire to make a general confession, or, if one has already been gone through in the past, to make

another general confession, although the confessor points out the absence of any necessity.

(4) When he is firm in his belief that the confessor does not understand the condition of his soul.

(5) When he is of the opinion that he has deceived the confessor, who, he thinks, does not know how bad he is.

Dreads

Now we shall turn aside for a moment to show that medical science presents us with something analogous to scruples, with this exception, however, that it pleases the specialist to refer to them as "dreads." They are called "phobias," from the Greek name signifying dread, and in Greek terms of very impressive sound they are classified as "misophobia," *i.e.*, dread of the dirt;

"skotophobia," dread of the dark; "aerophobia," dread of heights; and "claustrophobia," dread of shut-in places.

To one of these in particular we shall turn our attention, *viz.*, "misophobia," dread of the dirt, because it affords a striking analogy to fear of sin, the basis of scrupulosity.

It is not unknown that patients suffering from "dread of the dirt" will go to abnormal lengths in the hopes of avoiding what they believe to be contamination. To wash the hands after having touched an article handled by any other person; to avoid with all possible care what is to them a painful ordeal—the commonplace action of shaking hands; to wear gloves on all occasions possible, and, even when so protected, to use careful discrimination as to the objects touched—these are among its chief characteristics.

To throw further light upon the question, be it remembered that cases are on record,

showing that poor patients afflicted with the aforementioned malady have practically washed off the skin from their hands, thereby giving rise to painful skin troubles under various forms, in consequence of the craving to remove not only the smallest spot of dirt, but even the semblance thereof.

Nor is it irrelevant to our immediate purpose to show that scruples are exemplified by that malady sometimes found among inebriates, and known under the name of "Delirium Tremens."* Those affected by this particular disease see animals and beings of strange and fantastic shape which exist, not in the external world, but only in the imagination of the sufferers.

* We would point out that since Scruples are an obsession (it makes no difference that they have reference to something religious), they naturally point to the presence of a neurotic disturbance. Our method—*viz.*, to ignore the scruple completely is, plainly, a natural means of removing the malady. By doing away with the strain of mental analysis and by stopping the wastage of psychical energy, our method helps to relieve the mental tension and thus restore calm of mind.

The evil which the scrupulous imagine they see is, as we shall explain later on, as unreal as Macbeth's "dagger of the mind."

REASON OF STRANGE CONDUCT

Two Sides in every Dispute

We are now confronted with a problem passed over in silence, or treated—and we trust we may say so without giving offence—with inaccuracy by many claiming special knowledge of it.

Is a scruple a "groundless" fear in every sense of the word "groundless," or to couch it in plainer terms, have the scrupulous anything on their side?

In this intelligent, rational, twentieth century, the scrupulous are often hated and despised of man, trodden underfoot and spurned by a class who are prompt to believe any story, however extravagant, that is told to the disadvantage of the sufferers, as if the scrupulous were

intensely hypocritical or grossly inconsistent. And yet, have they anything on their side?

In dealing with any viewpoint we must not keep our eyes and ears closely shut against every other viewpoint, and be furiously certain and energetically positive that we know all about the matter in question. We must listen attentively to what may be said on the other side.

Before coming to the question where the truth lies, it is certain that, though truth is one, there are always two sides in every dispute. We do not say both of them are always supported by arguments equally convincing.

Thus it is with the subject under consideration. There is the viewpoint of the scrupulous, and the version of those who do not understand them, and, if you hear only the latter, you will be inclined to think that nothing can be said on the other

side. If, then, a person listens only to one side of the question, and does not give fair play to the other, he will think the case of the scrupulous too absurd to be enquired into, too untenable to be defended too dangerous to be treated with fair dealing.

And with the scrupulous, we have every reason to believe there are two sides to the question, and that a scruple is not a "groundless" fear of sinning, in every sense of the word "groundless."

Those unsympathetic with scruples may call ours a one-sided statement if they will. They may doubt it if they will. We intend to maintain that evidently there ARE two sides to the question, and that those who do not know there are two, are violent because they are ignorant, and fail to give the scrupulous a hearing, and bid them to be thankful if tolerated, because they are not equal to the task of appreciating the line of thought belonging to another.

Is a Scruple a "Groundless" Fear?

We now proceed towards the solution of the difficulty which has been stated—a question of special interest and importance—whether there is a ground for the anxiety, the obstacle, which, it is our belief, lies in the way of advancement towards peace of mind.

If the fear of being morally corrupt is without foundation—and we have every reason for believing it is so, on receiving from the confessor the verdict of "not guilty"—how comes it that we often deal with a case like the following?

We find our friend Giles a pleasant as well as an engaging companion, a man of undoubted ability; but his opinions on the state of his soul are either very unsettled, or at least, very exceptional. And though he is always otherwise docile, yet we cannot

advance him one step towards the conviction that he is wrong and that we are right, in the matter which happens to be in dispute. Such a personage is no unusual phenomenon in our day.

With him the course is, at best, a choice of difficulties. He knows of no course without a difficulty; yet choose he must. His case is a hard one, though apparently not so, judging by the surface of things, and without reference to the reason or foundation for his conduct.

Though burning with the desire to accomplish in all things God's Holy Will, he finds himself confronted with a difficulty apparently insuperable. On the one hand he hears the voice of obedience urging him to fulfil the confessor's directions, namely, to ignore the desire of repeating confessions, which repetitions are but too often a source of humiliation; to pass over this or that temptation without worry; to receive Holy Communion, the source of all

life, in the face of every inclination to the contrary; but, on the other hand, is the inward conviction* that past confessions, since they appear sacrilegious, must be repeated; this or that temptation, because —it is his belief—dwelt upon, must be acknowledged; and to receive Our Lord into the dwelling place of such a soul covered with sin, would be nothing short of treason.

Accordingly, by reason of the circumstances of his apprehension, he would not hesitate to say that he would lay down his life in defence of the veracity of his viewpoint.† With his thoughts ever in a tangle, his difficulties, it is his belief, are so many and of such importance that he can scarcely give himself time to explain them one by one. Hours or even days preceding the time appointed for confession,

*The conviction exists when the malady is in an advanced stage. When it is in its milder form, there is very serious doubt.

†This state of mind is peculiar to those wearing—as we shall explain later on—"black glasses."

may be spent in committing his troubles to paper, a task not completed without much exhaustion, physical and mental.

Sufferings of the Scrupulous

If the fears of being morally corrupt are "groundless" in every sense of the word, how can we account for the mental torture afflicting the genuinely scrupulous?*

Only with failure must our attempts be met when endeavouring to describe adequately the mental torture borne in silence by these poor creatures, crushed by sorrow, drinking deep of the bitter cup of grief. When we think we know their sufferings, we shall know but half; and if our hearts

*The sufferings vary according to the intensity of the malady.

grow warm with compassion for them, they will be cold in comparison with that compassion which is their due.

Gazing across the wide expanse of ocean, we see the waters hemmed in on every side by the grey horizon, yet that dreary waste of water tells us nothing of what is hidden beneath the surface. And so it is when we endeavour to fathom the anguish of the scrupulous mind, revealed to us sometimes in a heartfelt sigh or in the emaciated cheek or silver-threaded hair.

Picture to yourself, kind reader, according to the powers of your imagination, the exquisite ingenuity of medieval prisons, the variety of torture capable of being inflicted upon our wincing flesh and aching bone; reflect upon the capacity of suffering contained in each nerve cell; fathom to its very depths the bitterness of lacerated feelings; think of the overwhelming burden of a heavy, leaden day of dark oppression. Take all these at their highest; all without

alleviation, and what is more, without any hope of relief, for the poor soul is in a desert where no flowers of comfort are growing; or, if we may be pardoned for varying the metaphors, it is in a bath of molten pain; on it are focussed the miseries of the world, burning like fire, corroding like an acid poison. All this, gentle reader, is but a dull picture of the sorrows consequent upon scruples.

Our silent sufferer, but too often the recipient of many an unkind look, feels covered with a moral leprosy, filling every pore of his conscience, persuading him that his priceless soul is steeped in all species of crime, heinous and hateful, with all their native horror and grossness; and all the while he fails to rid himself of the conviction that in God's holy sight he is one mass of corruption, a foul, loathsome creature, guilty of all the abominations and iniquities committed since the Flood. Reviewing his past life, there meets his

gaze one huge black mass of wickedness; all his efforts are fruitless; his most—in reality—innocent deeds, coming like birds of prey, settle in the branches of memory, and remain to devour the substance of his supernatural life. The evil spirit ceases not to attack him by day and by night, in the hope of dragging him into the abyss of despair and destruction.

Existence and Nature of the Obstacle

All will grant this much—that there is a defect which we should pray and labour to remove. This one thing is certain—whatever is taught, omitted, exaggerated, or extenuated, with regard to scruples, at least there is a foundation. If ever there was a safe truth, it is this.

We shall now enquire into the nature of the obstacle or foundation. The solution of this question will bring to an end, we hope, the train of thought upon which we have hitherto been engaged.

If we must give the cause of this remarkable state of affairs, we must simply say that the scrupulous have lost the faculty of looking at some things in a natural way, that they have in some spheres an unsound conscience, or, in other words, by way of speaking more clearly, and as a chief illustration of what is meant, let us say they look at some things through "black" or "clouded glasses."*

We express ourselves thus crudely, in order to give the most expeditious insight into the view we wish to put before our readers.

Dismissing, then, once and for all, the idea of "groundless" in every sense of the

*As we shall point out later, the "glasses" are "clouded" when the malady is in its mild form. However, the remedy is the same.

word, we now proceed to investigate the results of wearing this colouring medium.

When, through these "black glasses" a sufferer examines his conscience on the cause of his worry, can he expect to find anything but "black"* on his soul? When reviewing his past life, when examining his conscience after Satan has launched an attack upon him with siege guns of every calibre, when making a search with a view to finding out if everything has been rightly told in confession, what can he hope to discover? Will his soul appear "white"? To his eyes it will be covered with worse than Egyptian darkness.† "In Egypt there was darkness when the Lord said to Moses, 'Stretch out thy hand towards Heaven, and may there be darkness upon the land of Egypt, so thick that it might be felt.'" There was darkness

*We are not using the expression "to see black" in its scientific import, but only in a more or less metaphorical sense.

†When the sufferer is wearing "smoked glasses," he will naturally "see" things only "fogged."

over the wicked cities when God destroyed them and the inhabitants thereof. There was darkness all over the earth at Our Lord's death; "And it was about the sixth hour and there was darkness all over the earth until the ninth hour. And the sun was darkened." But all this is as noon-day splendour when compared to the desolation sweeping over the troubled soul.

So, the conscience of the scrupulous is unsound. Conscience, be it borne in mind, is to be listened to when sound, *i.e.*, when not wearing "black" or "clouded glasses," but its dictates are to be scorned when it is scrupulous, *i.e.*, when wearing a colouring medium.

Such is our viewpoint of the scrupulous, and it offers an intelligible explanation of what seems to us to be strange conduct. It will enable us to lay down a very simple rule to measure the value of every alleged

spot on their souls; and it will provide a bulwark against despair.*

Such is our promise, though some effort may be required and some difficulty may be experienced in carrying out the remedy we shall prescribe.

* We have already stated that Scruples point to the presence of a neurotic disturbance. By this we mean that the sufferer is wanting in psychical energy. We do not necessarily mean that his nervous tissue is actually diseased in any way, for scrupulosity may, as far as we know, co-exist with physical fitness. We say *as far as we know,* because the physiology of the nervous system is not yet far advanced, and there exist no positive reliable tests (there is, however, strong negative evidence) showing that in a clear case of obsession the nervous tissue is perfectly healthy. It is possible (but highly improbable) that there are cases of nervous deterioration which escape such helpful tests as the "ankle-clonus" and "knee-jerk" reflexes. The microscopic methods used by some nerve specialists to test nerve tissue are, we think, of true worth only when the malady of nerve deterioration is in an advanced stage. It is not irrelevant to state that sometimes after a surgical operation phobias will disappear.

To examine the worry during the hour of temptation or immediately afterwards is to use up still more the psychical energy—*i.e.,* it fixes on the "glasses" more firmly. To ignore the worry removes the "glasses."

The following, perhaps, might be a suitable definition of a scruple :—A spiritual worry of an habitual nature arising from the *inability* of the sufferer to "see" the true spiritual "colour" of, at least, some of his actions.

Adverse critics of the following section were, it is clear, not acquainted with the context. In No. 9, p. 71, lines 1—3, the sufferer is rebuked for not "seeing" things as the director does . . . . Page 97, line 13, "*We must be*" means "*We insist upon being.*"

VIEWPOINTS OTHER THAN OURS*

In proceeding now, according to our original plan, to examine in detail what seem to us to be words of harshness spoken against the scrupulous, with regret we state that our view-point is out of harmony with that usually taken by theologians.

When we select the words of those differing from us, we wish to throw ourselves into them and to determine what they mean, by the light of the context. And we have a confident expectation that, in proportion as these objections are looked in the face, they will fade away.

With most of these views, but expressing some of the sentiments usually prevalent as to the nature of scruples, we are partly in disagreement, if not totally so. More-

*Some may prefer postponing the reading of this chapter till after "Remedy," p. 101.

over, we cannot find ourselves of one mind with some theologians when it is a question of the two fundamental rules for the scrupulous, namely (*a*) the circumstances under which an action is to be confessed as a mortal sin, and (b) the length of time to be spent in the examination of conscience.

Our position does not arise—and we trust our readers will believe us when saying so—from a temperament animated with a spirit of contradiction. Spiritual directors—it is our desire—will find nothing offensive in our remarks, as none of us are in search of a personal victory, though it is our anxiety to arrive at the truth.

As chapters on scruples, for the most part, fail to answer the various doubts felt by the sufferers, we shall treat of our difficulties at length, in the hope of leading the way to a clear understanding of this department of spiritual malady.

These solutions of ours will be nothing more than a representation of the one idea, *viz.*, that the "seeing" of "black" is a natural consequence upon one's wearing "black glasses," and unless the presence of this colouring medium is clearly pointed out to the sufferer, he is correct from his view-point; in other words, right in his wrong-doing.

Nor is it out of place to repeat that the "glasses" may be worn with regard to certain points only. In other words, the sufferer may see the true moral worth of only some of his actions, while he views his other actions through a colouring medium.

A clear distinction must be drawn between "seeing" the sin, and yielding to "belief" in its presence. In cases where this spiritual malady is not in its worst form, the "black glasses" may disappear for a very short period. This may be noted by a brief duration of peace, occasionally met with, it may be, immediately after a

general confession, or when the penitent is allowed to have his own way; but then, the "black glasses" returning, things are as black as they were prior to the temporary disappearance, if not more so.

Again, we may meet some cases when the penitent, after the removal of the "black glasses," may see, and thus acknowledge, "all is well." At the same time he is free from all anxiety, but the "black-glasses" soon return, and he firmly believes he was deceived for that short period.

Moreover, it may happen that a penitent sees his soul "clouded," "dark"—not mortal sin explicitly; something—it is his conviction—is wrong; he knows not what it is, but he does not wish to run the risk of declining to "swear" to the presence of sin; should he omit to take his oath on the presence of grave guilt, it is with no slight hesitation he does so.* In this latter case,

*The "clouded glasses," it is scarcely necessary to add, may disappear for a short time only, not unlike the "black glasses."

as the difference is so inappreciable, and since our treatment is the same for both conditions, we might almost be justified in saying that he is wearing "black glasses."

To sum up: Intense disquietude and want of submission always point to the presence of "black glasses." Anxiety in a milder form and submission with reluctance point to the presence of "clouded glasses." Brief peace of mind shows that the obstacle is gone for the time being. However, it is the habitual state of the scrupulous to wear the colouring medium.

Enough, we feel, has now been said by way of introducing this part of our undertaking, so we shall treat of the difficulties without delay.

(1) "In reality, the man who, when disquieted by a scruple, yields to an impression in spite of reason, is a coward. He is as inconsistent as a child who does not dare enter a dark room in the evening

because he says burglars may be there. To convince him of the contrary he is taken into the room with a light and made to look into all the corners. When he comes out again, he admits that no burglars are there. 'Very well, then,' they say, 'now go in alone.' 'No,' he answers, 'perhaps there may be some.' "

Answer. We do not know precisely what the writer means by "in spite of reason." But the example is scarcely parallel with the case of the scrupulous. He who is wearing "black" or "clouded glasses" never sees his soul free from guilt, and, failing a clear explanation of his state, he is naturally perturbed. It is only during the temporary removal of this obstacle that he sees that "all is well," but then he is not disquieted. Mental disturbance is a sure proof of the presence of the colouring medium. And so, no inconsistency is involved when, at one time, I see

things "black" or "clouded" whilst wearing the "glasses," and at another time, owing to their absence, all appears "white."

(2) The scrupulous worry themselves over trifles; they look on God as a tyrant; have no trust in Him; make a mockery of confession, etc.

Answer. The foregoing sentiments are often voiced, but surely it is otherwise!

To the scrupulous, it is no trifle to worry over what seems to them to be a soul covered with the leprosy of sin. It is through their "glasses" we should view the situation, when accounting for what we would regard as strange conduct. And what would be our line of action if wearing "black" or "clouded glasses," and not knowing that our conscience was unsound?

Firmly believing that God sees their soul in the same light as they do, to expect punishment unless freed from what they

suppose to be moral corruption, is most natural to them. To look for reward whilst closing their eyes, as they think they do, to what they imagine is spiritual degradation, would taste of presumption. It is their firm belief that the fault is all on their own side. Remembering the obligation to reveal their mortal sins, they are anxious to make bare the condition of their soul as it seems to them.

What is more natural than that the afflicted should seek relief? What more natural than that one guide lacking sympathy, they should be in quest of another? What more natural than that failing to have a clear diagnosis of their case put before them, they should seek another fount of wisdom?

(3) It is often maintained or implied that the existence of scruples points to mental weakness.

Answer. It would be wonderful, indeed,

if a malady which entails all the tortures heretofore described, would not sometimes result in insanity.

That scrupulosity may end in madness, we are far from denying, or even doubting; but that it points to the presence of mental weakness, we can scarcely maintain. To hold this latter view would drive us to the inevitable conclusion that some of the greatest saints, viz., St. Teresa, St. Ignatius, St. Alphonsus, were not perfectly balanced mentally.

(4) The scrupulous are self-centred, always talking about their troubles.

Answer. Our first observation is this—All do not speak of their troubles. More often than not, from shame they hide them—except from the confessor—for they are firm in their belief that their soul is covered with a moral leprosy.*

*This firmness of belief shows the presence of "black glasses" only.

Again, how many are the souls in anxiety, distress, or loneliness, whose one need is to find a being to whom they can pour out their feelings unheard by the world! Tell them out, they must. They cannot tell them to those who are lacking in sympathy with them; they wish to tell them to one who can sympathise with them; they wish to relieve themselves of a burden, to gain a solace, to receive the assurance that all is well. They are ever in search of that divine peace, that soothing charm, which the world can neither give nor take away.

That we may not seem to be over-indulgent towards the scrupulous, we shall give the reader a few ideas of nerve trouble, a malady which is often the cause or the effect of scruples. From this he will be able to decide whether our explanation of the sufferings is gratuitous or no.

Neurotic patients, medical science tells us, are ever looking for sympathy, and sympathy they must get. Too often, and

perhaps more frequently than it is realised, they meet with sarcasm, incredulity, coldness, if not contempt. It is by no means uncommon to meet with men and women who think their duty done, when, in their wisdom and philanthropy, they pronounce the sufferers victims of imagination.

None there are, we are told, whose sufferings are purely imaginary, all being afflicted and in need of pity. Quite true it is, we grant, that there are numbers in whom no physical defect can be detected in spite of the closest observation. Although furnished with medical certificates of health, it cannot be denied that for years, or perhaps their whole life long, they are suffering a silent but veritable martyrdom. To all appearance in perfect health, they receive very little sympathy owing to their irritability. Looking well and showing plenty of activity—and if we can judge from what meets our gaze—robust and healthy, they are deprived of sympathy just

when they need it most. Being deprived of the garment of human consolation, they die of cold.

Different as opinions are on nervous trouble in its nature and its consequences, we should never close our eyes to the all important fact that these patients suffer horror, mental as well as physical. And as, in spite of the advance of science, mistakes occur in the field of medicine, should we not be on our guard against judging the neurotic patient from signs merely external?

"Not understood!
How many breasts are aching
For lack of sympathy; Ah, day by day,
How many cheerless, lonely hearts are breaking!
How many noble spirits pass away,
Not understood!"

(5) The scrupulous penitent is recommended not to confess the source of his

worry as a sin (mortal, of course) unless he can swear it is grave matter.

Answer. Why are we in disagreement with this regulation? The fact that the scrupulous penitent is prepared to swear to the presence of sin is not a sufficient reason for his confessing it; and its application creates no prepossession in favour of its accuracy. It does not seem possible, then, to avoid the conclusion, that, whatever be the proper rule, this regulation is hardly effective of any satisfactory result.

Anyone unconsciously wearing "black glasses" is ever in a position justifying his taking an oath that the objects in the field of vision are "black."* Does he not always "see" things in anything but a "white" condition?

(6) Some theologians recommend the scrupulous not to spend much time in the

*Those unconsciously wearing only "fogged glasses" cannot, it is obvious, take an oath that the object under consideration is "black."

examination of conscience before confession. It were better, others again maintain, to tell only those troubles which occur to the mind without inquiry, or those which make themselves known on the first glance at conscience.

Answer. The scrupulous person who examines his conscience for any space of time, no matter how brief, will not fail to discover his soul as either "black" or "clouded."

Again, as the supposed "black" or "clouded" spots on the soul are ever haunting the penitent, little or no reflection is needed to enquire into their existence. The thorn ever in his flesh reveals its presence without need of reflection. His apparent guilt, haunting him by day and by night, hangs like a mill-stone around his neck, not to be shaken off save by an effort, titanic as well as prolonged.

(7) " The sufferer (from scruples) has no one to blame but himself."

Answer. To this we scarcely need reply, as the answer is evident when we consider the origin of scruples.

By way of answering an objection that may possibly arise with regard to the third cause of scruples already spoken of, we shall briefly discuss the philosophical principle of the imputability of actions.

Passing over in silence those cases where the malady of scruples arises from a constitution delicate from birth—and the absence of all culpability is here but too evident—and turning our mental gaze to the consideration of those scruples issuing from bodily weakness, the natural outcome of, it may be, inordinate study, or imprudent abridgment of sleep, are we not perfectly justified in maintaining that the sufferer is not always—if ever—the culpable cause of the mental disturbance

consequent upon his imprudent line of action?

Our reasons for this assertion rest upon the philosophical principle of the imputability of the effects of our actions. When some evil results from our actions, and is not intended, in order that we may be held guilty of this bad effect, among other conditions requisite, we must foresee that this bad result will arise or may easily follow. Supposing our friend Jones, through indiscreet austerity, finds himself in a sea of scruples, we cannot lay claim to philosophical accuracy in holding him culpably afflicted, unless—with other conditions—when acting with undue severity, he foresaw that the consequence could at least easily arise.

In view of all this, are we making too exorbitant a request when expressing the wish that care should be taken not to omit the word "culpable" or "inculpable"

when the cause of scruples is under consideration?

(8) "And a scruple may almost be defined to be the culpable ignorance of this," *i.e.*, the difference between temptation and sin.

Answer. Things appear "black" from wearing the glasses of three-fold origin. Just as "all seems yellow to the jaundiced eye," so under the circumstances it is impossible for the penitent to distinguish "white" from "black," *i.e.*, whether he has resisted temptation or yielded to it.

We must bring with precision before the penitent how he stands in God's eyes. He will not be able to move a step in comfort until this is done. It is of absolute necessity and plain duty from the first, to provide as soon as possible a clear statement of the case which would encourage and reassure the scrupulous and repel the attacks of Satan.

(9) "Another man may discern that my scruple is not a sin, but if I discerned it for myself it would not be a scruple."

Answer. Precisely! This is our position. The object is "white" to another man not wearing "black glasses," but owing to the presence of this colouring medium, the scrupulous find everything "black" or, at least, "clouded." Those who admit the presence of the "glasses" should not, if consistent—will not when they learn to be consistent—find fault with the viewpoint of the scrupulous.

(10) "They (*i.e.*, the scruples) are not sins, but they are so full of wrong dispositions that they can become sins at a moment's notice."

Answer. We readily grant that they are not sins. The whole aim of the scrupulous is directed towards the avoiding of sin. They abstain from this or that action,

because to their eyes, it is none other than "black" or, at the least, of "clouded" moral worth.

"They are so full of wrong dispositions," etc. We fail to see the wrong dispositions. The sufferers cannot help seeing their souls as "black" or "clouded," and unless the presence of the colouring medium be pointed out to them, one can scarcely blame them for following the verdict of their spiritual eyes.

"They can become sins at a moment's notice." This can have only one correct meaning for us, *viz.*, they may lead in the end to a life of laxity and abandonment.

(11) "It is unfortunate that the scrupulous are always spoken of with great compassion, far more than they deserve."

Answer. They are not always spoken of with great compassion, as we have endeavoured to point out in the preceding pages.

The scrupulous are the natural judges of the difficulties which beset their paths, and they are doubtless greater than one can fancy or forbode. And, it might be added, one has no right to refuse sympathy merely on the plea that one does not see the reason of their line of conduct. Even though their method of acting may seem strange to one, this appearance might, after all, be caused by one's incompetency to judge of their spiritual malady.

"Not understood, the secret springs of action
Which lie beneath the surface and the show,
Are disregarded; with self-satisfaction
We judge our neighbours, and they often go,
Not understood."

(12) "It is simply a perversity, and a wrongness, deserving certainly of pity,

but of the same kind and amount as we have for a man who is going to be hanged."

Answer. It is a "wrongness" in the sense of a false idea of his real state, but a perversity we can scarcely call it.

The malefactor here referred to is—we take it—the culpable cause of his being hanged, and yet what is the origin of the "glasses"? They are there from at least one of three causes. Nor can they be removed save by "believing" in the absence of sin; and yet, unless we are aware of the presence of this colouring medium, we are scarcely inclined to "believe" the opposite to what we "see."

Whilst the mind is wanting in a clear explanation, it is premature to expect a cure, as it would be a case of building in the primeval forest before its trees were felled.

(13) "Francesca of Pampeluna saw

many souls in purgatory only for scruples, and when this surprised her, Our Lord told her that there never was a scruple which was wholly without sin."

Answer. To have recourse to Private Revelations in support of any viewpoint is, for the most part, of little avail.

A lengthy treatment of Private Revelations may be regarded as beyond our present subject; however, allowing the importance of a right understanding of the special or Private Revelations, feeling that scruples may arise from adhering to pseudo-Private Revelations, realising that they require careful consideration, granting, moreover, that we may be fairly asked what we have to say of them, we shall dwell upon this particular point.*

* After reading the following pages, and in view of what we have already said, the reader will see that the case of Francesca was one of delusions.

Revelations are of two kinds. Those called Universal are contained in the Bible or in the Deposit of Faith, the body of revealed truths entrusted to the Apostles, and through the Apostles to the Christian Church. They came to an end with the preaching of the Apostles, and are matters of Faith for everyone. But it does not follow that God may not make special or Private Revelations, that He may not explain truths already revealed, or even reveal new truths, to individuals for their own particular benefit, or for the benefit of others.

That such Private Revelations have been in fact made, is commonly allowed by Catholics. They are reputed to have been received from time to time by pious men and women. We read of them in the Lives of the Saints; we hear of them in religious discourses; they enter largely into some of our popular devotions; they become even at

times the subject of considerable discussion and dispute.

We do not, of course, make reference to the strange statements which we sometimes read in leaflets or pious books that have been published without ecclesiastical authority.

In the event of their taking place, what is the value of such Private Revelations? What is their relation to the Catholic Religion? What is their bearing on the subject matter of Divine Faith? Of course, we are not speaking of those passages or portions of Private Revelations which treat of well-ascertained, even solemnly defined, doctrines of the Church. The infinite dignity and lovableness of the Sacred Heart of Jesus; the sorrow which the ingratitude and the sins of men are to Him; the efficacy of the satisfaction and reparation we can offer for one another—these are not new truths, not even developments and explanations of old truths.

They are part of the public teaching of Christ Himself, and of His Apostles; and though they may be emphasised in the writings of some visionaries, they were always held firmly and definitely taught by the Church.

First, assuming their genuineness and authenticity, they can never become any part of the Divine Deposit. That was full and complete when entrusted to the Church through the Apostles.

Indeed, the Church has never attempted to decide the authenticity of any Private Revelation.

She is not pledged to their authenticity, even when she submits them to careful examination, and then permits them to be published in printed books, or spread otherwise abroad among the faithful. She never allows them to influence her Dogmatic Teaching; she never makes use of them in her defence or explanation of Dogma. The Catholic faith would not be altered in

any least detail of belief, if all the Private Revelations granted since the Apostles died, were utterly blotted out from memory. No need to discontinue even one of our devotions, though the Private Revelations which suggested them were shown to be utterly untrue. Take, for instance, the Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Our Lord, and suppose that the revelations of Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque were totally discredited: no principle upon which the devotion rests would undergo the slightest change. We would still believe about Our Lord and His Sacred Heart exactly what we believe to-day. We should pay them the same worship. The very exercises of devotion with which we honour them would remain the same.

The Church often inquires into Private Revelations in her process of Beatification and Canonization, examining if they contain anything opposed to her settled doctrines, or to generally received Catholic

teaching; and she sometimes gives them a very qualified approval—to particular revelations more usually; very rarely, if ever, to a Saint's Revelations as a whole. But such approval, even if given, has a very limited significance. By this approbation she only intends to declare that nothing is to be found in them contrary to faith and morals, but she does not thereby guarantee the authenticity of the Revelations or the truth and accuracy of their contents.

Pope Benedict XIV is quite clear with regard to this question. "What is to be said of those private revelations which the Apostolic See has approved of? We have already said that those revelations, although approved of, ought not to, and cannot, receive from us any assent of Catholic, but only of human faith, according to the rules of prudence, according to which the aforesaid revelations are probable, and piously to be believed."

Cardinal Pitra says the same: "Everyone knows that we are fully at liberty to believe or not to believe in private revelations, even those most worthy of credence. Even when the Church approves them, they are merely received as probable, and not as indubitable. They are not to be used in deciding questions of history, natural philosophy, or theology which are matters of controversy between the Doctors. It is quite permissible to differ from these revelations, even when approved, if we are relying upon solid reasons, and especially if the contrary doctrine is proved by unimpeachable documents and definite experience."

But why this attitude of doubt and hesitancy? It is due to the want of satisfactory proof that God has in fact spoken, has made the Private Revelation which there is question of believing. I cannot believe on God's authority unless I am reasonably certain that He has spoken the

matter under consideration. True it is that God can, if He wills, give infallible assurance to His creatures that it is He, God Himself, Who speaks to them. When we converse with our friends we can commonly make them sure of our identity. God can do at least as much, if He condescends to address us. He did it when He spoke to Moses from the burning bush; He did it when He called forth Abraham from his father's house; He did it when He bade the Apostles follow Him; He did it when He struck down Paul at the gate of Damascus; and if you ask us how and by what means God can prove His personal identity, if and when He speaks to us, we need only answer that He is infinitely wise and infinitely powerful.

From what we have just said, it does not follow that God must necessarily authenticate every preternatural communication which He makes to mankind. He may speak and may leave it doubtful whether

He Himself has spoken. He spoke once and again to Samuel; and the prophet felt assured that it was Heli, the High Priest, who called to him. He may permit delusion and fraud; may allow men and women to believe honestly that they have received Divine Communications, when a diseased or excited imagination is the only foundation for their belief; He may allow them to practise upon the credulity of the Faithful and consciously to lay claim to revelations which they well know they have never received. There is even danger of hallucination and illusion in the case of very holy souls themselves. The Private Revelations which purport to have been made to persons of admitted sanctity are often strangely at variance with one another. The details of Our Lord's Passion which some Saints add, in their revelations, to the account of the Evangelists, cannot all be true. Indeed, there is always a danger that, as a soul becomes

more and more absorbed in contemplation, —is raised out of itself—it will grow more liable to confuse its own desires and imaginings with the communications made to it by God. St. Teresa, it is said, was accustomed to maintain that it is difficult, that she herself has found it difficult, to recognise always the narrow line which separates the true Divine vision from the false; and God has not bound Himself to guide the visionary, or those to whom He may make the vision known. And hence we may have truth and error intermingled in Private Revelations; and statements and passages which are clearly incorrect may prove nothing against the accuracy and authenticity of all the rest.

In view of what we have just stated, what is the more prudent attitude to adopt with regard to Private Revelations? There are rules for the better identification of genuine Revelations, but the process is a

delicate one and is rarely quite conclusive.* Miracles would be a sufficient and satisfactory demonstration. Instances may occur, no doubt, in which we can at once reject pretended revelations on the ground of their evident improbability. We have authentic and accepted standards with which to compare them. We have the many revelations made by Christ in the New Testament. We are familiar with their whole setting—the grave, gentle, loving, lovable character of Our Lord Who makes them, the kind of subject matter

*For further information on this point, the reader is recommended to consult Chapters XX.-XXIII. of "The Graces of Interior Prayer," by A. Poulain, S.J. In this renowned work we find the following instructions laid down :—

(1) Five causes of error that may have had an influence upon true Revelations, or Revelations regarded as such, at certain periods and in certain countries.

(2) Five causes of absolutely false Revelations.

(3) Seven kinds of inquiries to be made regarding the person who believes himself to be thus favoured.

(4) Nine points upon which information should be obtained either with regard to the Revelation considered in itself, or the circumstances that accompany it.

(5) Seven rules for the director.

(6) Seven rules for those who believe themselves to have received Revelations and visions.

with which He deals, the language which He employs. We know something of what to expect if we meet any revelation which purports to have been made by Him. It must harmonise with the Gospel revelations; it must be in keeping with the Gospel character of Our Lord; it must be concerned with grave issues, and it must touch them in a grave spirit. They must not be frivolous and seemingly unworthy of a Divine origin; they must not contradict each other. Hence, Revelations which picture Our Lord as wholly unlike the Christ of the Gospels, as harsh, unattractive and hard to please, censorious of little faults, severe in punishing them—and some such are to be found among the Revelations of modern Saints—should be looked on with suspicion, may even, we think, be held to be untrue. But, generally, we shall act more wisely if we make no attempt at all to judge Private Revelations. The data for a prudent judgment

are rarely within our reach. We should not give credence to them too lightly. Before attributing statements to any human friend we usually look for some proof that he has made them; and the ascribing of a statement to God is too solemn, too sacred, to be treated off-hand and without thought. It would even seem a grave want of the respect that is due to God to attribute Revelations to Him on evidence which one makes no attempt to weigh, or on grounds one would recognise as constituting no ground at all. Besides, a too ready acceptance of Private Revelations must lead to grave error often; for it is a religious error to hold something—although it is true—as coming from God if God has not revealed it; and it may lead to superstition and worse evils. Some of the saddest falls and most hurtful scandals in the Church have been due to pseudo-Private Revelations. Nor should we reject them without investigation. And, be it remem-

bered, to hesitate is not to reject; to profess one's inability to decide, is not to declare a Revelation to be untrue. As we have stated heretofore, miracles would be a sufficient and satisfactory proof that the Private Revelation has taken place. Apart from this rare means of forming an opinion, the discussion of reasons for and against gives nothing more than a greater or less probability, and when this is the case, we must not be afraid to own it. But, let us add, the undecided, neutral frame of mind is the best and wisest attitude for most of us when dealing with nearly all Private Revelations.

(14) "And all this is so connected with pride, etc."

Answer. Those who commonly urge that the scrupulous are guilty of pride have, we feel sure, no right to make this objection.

Pride it is apparently, but not so in reality. We cannot consistently find fault

with the man who "sees" things no other than "black" or "clouded" when wearing the "glasses." Why do we maintain that a certain object clearly before our eyes in the field of vision is, for instance, "white"? Because we "see" it so. Now, the scrupulous can give parallel reasons for their belief. If it is pride for them to "see" things "black" or "fogged," it is equally a sign of pride for us to "see" these same things "white."

(15) "Neither is a scruple the same thing as laxity, but Gerson thinks it is almost worse."

Answer. Theologians tell us that men with a lax conscience are not, for the most part, excused from grave sin, because they generally suspect the malice of their conduct. And yet some would have us believe it is not so bad as a scrupulous conscience!

(16) "Nay their (the evil spirits') per-

suasions and importunities can easily bring it to pass that what is a very little sin or no sin at all, may be turned into a mortal sin."

Answer. As to the meaning of the words of him who differs from us, it is difficult to determine what are his precise sentiments. If he wishes to convey the idea that despair and laxity may arise, our views are in harmony with his; otherwise to us his expression is not clear of meaning.

(17) "We (*i.e.*, the scrupulous) may be sure we have got hold of a wrong opinion about it," *i.e.*, some theological point,

Answer. The scrupulous, unfortunately, believe their opinion is the correct one. They wish to think the same as the confessor, but this inward persuasion that all is wrong, forces them to abandon a line of conduct which they believe as pernicious as it is illusory.

If there be any readers who doubt the correctness of this representation, we beg to ask such readers whether, in fact, they themselves have ever suffered the affliction we speak of, and, if they have not, we entreat them to fancy such an affliction for one moment, and how they would act and feel if it really took place.

(18) "If a man has laid to heart what has been said before, of looking on God as a Father, he will escape this snare."

Answer. We have given, we trust, our reply to this difficulty under objection No. 2. So we pass on.

(19) "He who loves God, wishes to avoid sin; but to wish to avoid the appearance of sin is by no means an infallible proof of sanctity and love."

Answer. The scrupulous out of love for Our Lord are intent upon avoiding sin. For them the distinction between evil

apparent and real does not clearly exist, as every action which is a source of worry to them appears, at least, "clouded."

(20) There are some who maintain that the existence of scruples points to want of activity, mental or bodily.

Answer. Were the aforementioned objection accurate, we would be bound in consistency to maintain that—to name a few—St. Teresa, St. Alphonsus, St. Ignatius were guilty of indolence—those saints who were veritable spiritual world-forces, saints who were mighty heroes for the sake of their Creator.

(21) "There is no search after God in scruples. Self is their centre."

Answer. The scrupulous wish to be cured; they set themselves upon it. They have within them ideas of greatness, goodness, holiness; they have a deep-seated long-

ing after purity of conscience. Divine life, eternal life, is the object they supremely long for.

Satan, we might add, does not give much trouble to those who already belong to him; it is his strong desire to gain those who belong to God.

Satan witnesses against us, if we may so speak, by being good friends with us. We can scarcely get on well with him without surrendering something that is precious and sacred.

(22) "Disobedience is the counterpart of scrupulosity."

Answer. It is a fair admission we make on behalf of the scrupulous when we grant they do not in their conduct throw aside authority altogether, for it is evident they take their stand upon the firm conviction that they are obliged to do so. They abstain from Communion, repeat past con-

fessions, but they do not so act without some good motive.

Having a burning desire to please God, yet fearing the possibility of committing a sacrilege—when suffering intensely they ever "see black"—they pointedly refrain from receiving the Bread of Life. Could this possibly be the conduct of one not anxious to please Our Lord?

Thus, for instance, persons who deny the absence of sin—and this they will do, failing the explanation of the presence of the "black glasses"—are, we conceive it, consistent in remaining away from Communion.

If they are told they are wearing "black glasses" but still fail in obedience, then we can scarcely believe they are pleasing to Our Lord. But if they are not so informed? In that case, the situation is but a choice of difficulties, *viz.*, to fail in receiving Holy Communion will be an offence against obedience; to comply may

end in sacrilege.* They follow the course most natural under the circumstances; they choose what they believe to be the lesser evil; they abstain from partaking of the Eucharistic Banquet.

And might it be added—To fail in pointing out the presence of "black glasses," and yet compel the sufferer, in virtue of Holy Obedience, to receive Holy Communion, is, we take it, a fearful and anxious trial to put the penitent under, and we cannot but feel loath to have recourse to it.

We may be asked if we ever deem it wise to place the sufferer under obedience to carry out our wishes. A cautious mind, it is our opinion, will so act with anxiety, for, that they are capable of easily carrying out our mandates, is a point to be proved, not supposed.

* When the "glasses" are only "smoked," the penitents receive Holy Communion, but with no slight hesitation. They might have been so teased, so worried, so questioned that, to escape black looks, sharp speeches and the unsympathetic chill of circumambient atmosphere, they drag themselves to receive the Heavenly Manna.

(23) "The second sign (of scruples) is a greedy desire to know our own interior state."

Answer. It is well for those enjoying mental peace, at their ease, with few cares, or in the joyous time of youth, to find fault with the conduct of the scrupulous; but when men are weighed down with sorrow, and when conscious of what they believe to be sin, they ask for something to lean upon, it will not be of use to tell them that they are suffering from "imaginitis." They want to be assured that what seems to be a sin, is no sin. They do not want any makeshift arguments, surmises, or conjectures. They want some broad, trustworthy view of the situation, some plain intelligible explanation of their state. They want something stable to lean upon, something more stable than their own minds. They have an instinctive feeling that there is an explanation which is their only stay, and it mocks them, after inquiring for the

remedy, to feel that there is no help which should be for them.

Until his state is clearly pointed out to him, the scrupulous penitent is—"An infant crying in the night: An infant crying for the light: And with no language but a cry." He is a watcher eagerly looking out for the glorious advent of Our Lord, Who will end the reign of misery, and bring consolation to him who at present is struggling with infirmity, and yet in his heart loves and reveres Him.

(24) "We must be told whether the sin we confessed be grave or not."

Answer. In this we find nothing worthy of condemnation. No one wishes to take an awful step without feeling sure he is right. No one, moreover, wishes to remain long in doubt whether he should take it or no.

Yet, these very same sufferers who fail to overcome objections and difficulties, if they had a clear vision of their condition,

would often have courage and strength enough to launch their boat, and would find themselves ere long in a haven of peace.

(25) "No," says St. Bonaventure, "To know that we have charity is not necessary to salvation, it is the having it which is so."

Answer. The Holy Doctor should have added that it was necessary to peace of mind.

(26) "We are disquieted and agitated by them (*i.e.*, the scruples), even while we persist in caressing them. If we were asked whether there be sin in such or such an action, we answer that there is not."

Answer. A view such as this is so extravagant, that it is really difficult to enter into the state of mind of the person maintaining it

As we have so often observed, the scrupulous person—unless told of the "glasses"

—never admits the absence of sin except during the temporary removal of this colouring medium, but then he is not disquieted.

(27) "The fifth sign is a fear of sin, even in actions which the man himself perceives to be undeniably excellent."

Answer. Our position is obvious. If he fears sin in any action, it is because he sees it "black" or "clouded."

(28) "The seventh sign is a perpetual hankering after our past confessions, a wish to rake them up—we do not know what is wrong with them."

Answer. The penitent, when wearing "black glasses," sees his past confessions as "black," and he has the firm conviction that salvation is impossible for him, unless he repeats past troubles. When the malady is not in its worst form, past confessions

appear as "clouded." Only in this latter case does he fail to grasp what is wrong with them.

It is our fear that we shall both weary and offend if we proceed with our objections; yet it was necessary to give an idea of the popular views concerning the scrupulous and their troubles.

REMEDY

Must Admit Presence of Scruples

When the presence of "black" or "clouded glasses" has been clearly pointed out to the scrupulous, their viewpoint must change.* But how many have their state clearly put before them? Some scrupulous penitents, it is our belief, often have reason for complaining "that the Gospel was not preached to them"; that their condition was never placed before them clearly and fully, and intelligibly and logically; that they were bid to "see" white, although wearing a colouring medium; in other words, there is often assumed throughout the complete absence of any such colouring medium.

When the presence of the "glasses" has

* The remedy is the same whether the penitent is wearing "black" or "clouded glasses"

been pointed out, the scrupulous penitent must grant with the confessor the absence of sin on his soul, in other words, that the latter is "white." The more he thinks over the experience of the past, the more useless will it seem for him to aim at cure, if obedience is not the fundamental principle. UNTIL THE PENITENT GRANTS HE IS WEARING A COLOURING MEDIUM—*i.e.*, the "glasses" —NO ADVANCE TOWARDS CURE CAN BE EFFECTED.

One thing at a time is the general rule for getting through business well; and it applies to the subject under consideration.

The granting of the presence of the colouring medium is the first thing the penitent must do—the very thing which, if not done, will impede his cure.

To the penitent we say with intense conviction :

"'You may as well go stand upon the beach,

And bid the main flood bate his usual
height;
You may as well use question with the
wolf,
Why he hath made the ewe bleat for the
lamb;
You may as well forbid the mountain
pines
To wag their high tops, and to make no
noise,
When they are fretten with the gusts
of heaven;'

you may as well embark upon any enterprise, no matter how hopeless, as seek to be cured before first admitting the presence of the colouring medium."

The penitent has always viewed things from one stand-point, and he must now adapt himself to another.

The sufferer must look upon himself as a blind man who has to wind his way through obstacles in and out, avoiding some

things, catching at others. He must so act or gain nothing. He must reconcile himself to what he would have far otherwise if he followed his own inclinations in the matter.

The path to be followed will be dark. Still, in this course alone is to be found what is found nowhere else—a realisation of his inward longings.

The scrupulous penitent must live and die in the simple, full, firm belief that he is wearing a colouring medium in spite of the inward persuasion to the contrary. If he will doubt, if he does not allow the confessor's word to be sufficient for him, he will miss peace of mind : he is choosing a path leading to spiritual, if not also, bodily ruin.

However inapposite it may be, we shall digress for a few brief moments to show that various movements are adopted by some scrupulous persons in the hope of driving away these troublesome thoughts. These

defensive impulses are what the French call "tics de défense." The patients shake their heads or make movements expressive of disgust. Some strike themselves, even going so far as to inflict bodily harm, at the same time laying at their own doors the responsibility for their condition. Other some endure self-imposed penances and long fasts, undergoing privation of what is strictly necessary. These austerities, we may point out, only tend to excite the nerves and aggravate the morbid state of the sufferers without any likelihood of obtaining the desired result.

Examination of Conscience

The circumstance that the sufferer has already granted, *viz.*, the presence of the "glasses," will be an urgent call on him, in consistency, to refrain from examining through this colouring medium. He will

not fail to observe the appositeness of what we enjoin as to the duty of going by "belief," and not by what he "sees."

On what is the scrupulous penitent to examine his conscience? On the scruples, *i.e.*, the points of trouble? This we do not recommend, as the verdict will invariably be "black," "guilty," or, at least, "clouded," "doubtful." And why? Because, as previously mentioned, the sufferer wears the "glasses" when examining only those actions which are a source of worry to him. Hence he fails to see them in their true colour.

And is he not to examine on the scruple even for a very short time, not to glance at it for an instant? This treatment does not find favour with us, as one glance through the "glasses" will reveal things as "black" or "clouded."

ON THE POINTS WHICH ARE A SOURCE OF ANXIETY, in other words, ON THE SCRUPLE (and it may be

observed in passing, that, in the vast majority of cases the source of mental anguish is holy purity in its various aspects), THE SUFFERER MUST NOT EXAMINE HIS CONSCIENCE FOR ONE SECOND; HE MUST IGNORE THE SCRUPLE.

What precisely is to be the subject matter for the examination of conscience? It must be only THINGS OUTSIDE OF THE WORRY, for such things and such things alone can he see in their true colour.

Confession

When the confessor has once detected that the matter under consideration is a scruple, the penitent must make no mention of it in confession.

And, supposing that the source of anxiety appears to the spiritual eye of the

penitent "black"; "black" and horrible; as "black" as paganism, or rather, much worse; so "black" that the sufferer can take his oath that he must have consented? Even in this case, NO REFERENCE, EVEN IN THE SLIGHTEST DEGREE, must be made to it in confession.

And why this omission to mention the worry in confession, although it is clearly "seen" to be "black"? To the sufferer the sin is as clearly present as the dagger to Macbeth, who said:

"I see thee yet in form as palpable
As that which now I draw.
Thou marshall'st me the way that I was
going;

. . . . . .

I see thee still;
And on thy blade and dudgeon gouts of
blood,
Which was not so before."

But since it was—

" A dagger of the mind, a false creation,
Proceeding from the heat-oppressèd brain."

Macbeth eventually concluded—

" There's no such thing :
It is the bloody business which informs
Thus to mine eyes."

In like manner, the scrupulous penitent can safely remark, " There's no such thing as sin in this action which worries me. It is the ' black glasses' which make it appear wicked to my eyes."

The penitent must also bear in mind that, so long as the aforementioned worry continues, he can safely " believe " his soul " white "—if we may so speak—with regard to it.

When the worry ceases, the former source of anxiety will be seen in its true colour,

viz., "white."* And so it is that all the wisdom of the confessor will have been mere matter of faith, but the cure when it comes will confirm faith by actual sight.

We do not recommend the penitent to confess "so and so" (which nearly always has reference to holy purity) in so far as he has offended God. We are well aware of the failure of this so-called remedy. And even should grave sin in the matter of holy purity have existed in the past, it is not our belief that any reference should be made to it, NOT EVEN IN A GENERAL WAY.

If the past has been one of sin, and mention of it has been made in confession, then the guilt is gone, and gone for ever. All thought of it must be swept away, as if by a flood, silently, suddenly, and without memorial. And now, any doubts upon its being pardoned are, in the case of our penitent, nothing short of a scruple. And

* The reader must take care not to argue thus:—"If there is worry, there is no sin. Therefore, if there is no worry, there is sin." Such reasoning is fallacious.

a SCRUPLE MUST BE IGNORED COMPLETELY.

Matter for confession must be something other than scruples—WHICH SCRUPLES MUST NOT BE MENTIONED ON ANY ACCOUNT. For, strange to say, the sufferers view the scruples, *i.e.*, the source of anxiety, through "black" or "clouded glasses," which "glasses" are removed, as it were, whilst they are examining their conscience on matter outside the scruples. Feelings of pride, disobedience, uncharitableness—these things they usually see in their true colour.

We give this as a short and comparatively easy method for removing the "glasses," *i.e.*, the scruples, To follow the advice of the confessor will please Our Lord and remove the colouring medium; to disobey will please Satan, and stabilise its presence. The scrupulous person has his choice.

Objections in the Mind of the Scrupulous

Those who have acquitted themselves best in the trial, will often be disposed to think that they have failed most miserably.

"But, Father," the poor troubled soul may say, "I feel I am making up my mind to be lost if I obey you. I cannot put away the thought that I have deceived you, and that all these things are mortal sins. In spite of what you tell me about mentioning in confession only trifles, I feel there is no remedy but a really good confession of my whole life, after due preparation. You would not think that were I in the state of grace, I could be upset in this way. God seems to be turned away from me. I would give all the world if I could feel that all my sins were forgiven. If I mention only those troubles you name, I shall feel the biggest hypocrite in the world. I should be happy

could I tell you everything as it really is. I find it impossible to believe I am scrupulous. There is something wrong. I don't know what it is. (This remark is offered by those wearing "clouded glasses"). You have never previously met a case like mine. I think you do not know how bad I am. I do not mean to say you don't understand, but I haven't told you enough. In fact, I am afraid to let it continue, thinking that the surest way is to make a good confession, and then start again with more earnestness to please God. And sometimes the more I try to obey and believe what you say, the blacker all seems. So, dear Father, in conclusion, allow me to make a general confession; permit me to tell this and that in my weekly confessions; let me examine my conscience on the source of my trouble—all of which is necessary for peace of mind."

A good, kind nurse, if skilled and intent upon the cure of a diabetic patient, will

not give him sweet foods, because she knows only too well that each mouthful, although it would afford temporary satisfaction, would succeed in increasing the malady and prolonging the starvation. All this she does, even though the sufferer in question may feel sure that the sweet foods are certain to be of use to him.

And so it is with the scrupulous patient. Every time he follows a line of conduct contrary to our instructions, in other words, every time he acts as he " feels " he should act, he is like a diabetic patient taking sugar foods which, though giving temporary relief, will prolong the agony of deprivation.

Every time the scrupulous patient examines his conscience, EVEN FOR ONE SECOND, on the source of worry, on each occasion that he makes the SLIGHTEST REFERENCE to it in confession, EVEN IN A GENERAL WAY, he is prolonging the agony.

This shows the delicacy with which we should treat the malady before us; yet all things considered, we think, it only indicates the cautious use, not the abandonment of the treatment in question.

The scrupulous patient must "believe" in spite of all "feeling" to the contrary, and he must not take things as he "sees" them, though he is sometimes tempted to think it very hard that he cannot. He must submit to his fate instead of quarrelling with it. He must hope against hope, believe against doubt, and obey in spite of gloom. He must "believe" in things he "sees" not. He must rely on the word of another. He cannot do without it, as it is his sole informant about the state of his conscience. This is the best, truest, safest, most blessed course to follow; and from the time that the scrupulous penitent consents to obey blindly, he is on the road to success.

The confessor requires co-operation.

Though invested with special character and clothed with special graces, and in a marked degree assisted by the Holy Spirit, he still needs the concurrence of the penitent that his labours may bear fruit. The penitent must be endowed with that child-like simplicity destined to win the kingdom of Heaven. Some theologians tell us we gain much more by simple obedience than by many a penitential exercise.

To whom shall the penitent go? If not to the confessor, where else? He may not like our treatment; he may be impatient or impetuous. He may go back, but forward he cannot go.

In the present state of affairs, the sufferer must—if we may so speak—from the desire of spiritual preservation, look about him; he is assailed by a very formidable party. We cannot over-estimate the tremendous power which is menacing him.

If the troubled soul persists in maintaining that he is not wearing "black" or

"clouded glasses," then we cannot promise him immunity from any condition, however heinous. Want of submission contains within itself the seeds of destruction, which time alone is required to develop. There is nothing, it is our fear, between disobedience and spiritual and bodily ruin. His virtue weakened by scruples, he may drift like an abandoned ship until he encounters the rocks of destruction. His life in part or wholly embittered and wasted, he may end by bringing sorrow and scandal to others. If he follows his own inclinations, his disobedience will lead him where there is no light, no peace, no hope; it will lead him where the sun and the moon and the stars are not, but chillness and barrenness and perpetual desolation.

While laying stress upon the importance of obedience, the words of some nerve specialists must be borne in mind. Some neurotic persons, they tell us, find it well nigh impossible to come to a decision, much

less to put a resolution into effect. Moreover, to declare their ability to control themselves, is as absurd as maintaining that a patient can subdue a fever. In such cases as these, it is the part of the prudent confessor to stimulate and make the best use of the little will power there may be, thus helping the afflicted one to comply with his prescription. Here, again, we insist upon kindness and gentleness to be maintained with patience and perseverance and an unwavering firmness.

The Will in Mind-Healing

Perhaps the greatest service we can do another is to help him to help himself. To help him directly might be weakening, but it is not necessarily so. It depends entirely upon circumstances.

There is scarcely any better way to help another than to bring him to the knowledge

of the powers that lie dormant within his soul, to help him estimate the power of will.

It is impossible to look into the conditions under which the battle of life is fought without perceiving how much really depends upon the extent to which will-power is strengthened, cultivated, and made operative in right directions.

The achievements of history have been the choice the determinations, the creations of the human will. The achievements of will-power have been almost beyond computation. Scarcely anything seems impossible to the man who can will strongly enough and long enough.

It is only when we try in earnest that we see the hidden strength of our wills.

The scrupulous should endeavour to pull themselves together and shake off the "black" or "clouded glasses" as they would shake off a ridiculously coloured hat. This can be done by an effort of the will. So the scrupulous should be taught the

important part played by the will in mind-healing.

It is will-power that enables poor, physical weaklings to perform stupendous work. Though they are weakened by disease, it is will-power that enables them to perform tasks well-nigh herculanean. The will can refuse to admit defeat; it can refuse to lie down under imaginary evils and threats. It can resolve to fight on to the bitter end. It can restrain fears from laying hold of the mind.

It is the will that commands, controls, and calls into operation all our faculties. It can tyrannise over them. It can force the hand to continue working in spite of a tired feeling. It can make us dash to the ground a glass of water though we may be parched with thirst.

It is the will that compels us to rise in the morning in spite of our inclination to sleep on. It is the will that forces us to resist temptation, to suppress our feelings.

It was the self-confidence, the determination of an iron will which took Napoleon over the Alps in mid winter. It led Nelson and Grant to victory. It has been the great tonic in the worlds of discovery, invention, and art. It has helped to win the thousand triumphs in war and science which we deemed impossible. The will made these men indomitable; they would simply do what they had planned.

We must have confidence in ourselves. If we would succeed up to the limits of our possibilities, we must hold constantly to the thought that we will be successful no matter what opposes.

Those who have accomplished great things in the world have been, as a rule, self-confident men. They dared to step out from the crowd and act in an original way. They were not afraid to be generals. Prompt decision, whole-souled action, swept the world before them.

The man without self-reliance and an iron will is the plaything of chance, the puppet of his environment, the slave of circumstances.

There is something sublime about him who possesses the spirit of boldness and fearlessness, who has the proper confidence in his ability to do and to dare. He who believes he can do the thing he attempts, who believes he is equal to the emergency—it is he who wins the confidence of his fellow-men.

We must regard as a traitor every suggestion that our life may be a failure, that we were not made like those who succeed, and that success is not for us. Such a thought must be expelled from the mind as we would expel a thief from the home. "Our doubts are traitors . . . And make us lose the good we oft might win . . . By fearing to attempt."

We put brakes upon the will's energies by our mental states of doubt, by hesitation,

and by contrary suggestion. Because we do not have enough confidence in ourselves, because we hesitate, fumble, and turn back, because we do not depend upon ourselves we fail miserably. And, it might be added, every failure to do what we should have done has its unfortunate effect upon us.

Most men fail not through lack of education and personal qualities but from lack of dogged determination, from lack of a dauntless will.

The quality of persistence is characteristic of all men who have accomplished anything great. They may be wanting in some other power, but the power to hold on is never absent from successful men. No matter how great the opposition or discouragement, drudgery cannot disgust them; obstacles cannot discourage them; labour cannot weary them. They realise that if they are to accomplish anything, it must be done by determined and persistent effort.

"Never give up, there are changes and
chances
Helping the hopeful a hundred to one."

Let us say what we will of talent, but the fact remains that no amount of talent ever availed upon the earth unless enforced by will-power to overcome the obstacles hedging around everybody who would rise above the circumstances in which he was born. The shores of fortune are covered with the stranded wrecks of men of brilliant ability, but who have wanted courage, self-confidence, decision. They perished in consequence in sight of more resolute but less learned adventurers who succeeded in making port.

Let us take a simple illustration. One bullet directed by powder in the barrel of a rifle is more destructive than ten bullets lying in a pouch. So it is that one talent with a will behind it will accomplish more than ten without it.

It is no wonder, then, that genius has been defined ninety per cent. perspiration and ten per cent. inspiration. "Genius, that power which dazzles mortal eyes
Is oft but perseverance in disguise."

It cannot be denied that we all have many kinds of powers which we habitually fail to use, for most of us have acquired the habit of, if we may so speak, mental slothfulness. Skimming only on the surface of our energy-reservoir, most of us have no idea of its depth. If our latent forces were to receive the proper stimulus, and if we were to set ourselves the task of overcoming all obstacles, we could soon reach the goal of success; we would soon accomplish the seemingly impossible.

Any habit, no matter how strong, can be broken if the individual sets himself to the task whole-heartedly, always providing that the subject is not insane or on the way to a mental home.

During the war there were literally thousands of cases of " shell-shock " which included hysterical symptoms of various kinds—contraction, paralysis, deafness. To pay attention to the patients was to increase their maladies. They were not practising deception deliberately, but they deceived themselves as to their condition. Lack of self-confidence had to be broken down. If the patient continued his lack of self-confidence, if he maintained a false attitude of mind towards himself, even if that mental attitude was not deliberate, he was forced to give it up. Punishments of various kinds were meted out, but not as punishments. The patient was told that they were only part of the treatment, that they were a stimulus to his latent will-energy. When punishments were applied, or when there was fear of their application, it was surprising how soon the patients got well.

A man must say "I will do it." These words stand out in bold relief like kings upon a draughts-board. They denote character, strength, confidence, power, decision, individuality. They foretell triumph over difficulties, victory in spite of discouragement. They point to daring enterprise, unfettered aspirations.

A man must not say "I will try," because this often means he already feels he cannot do it, but that he will make some sort of flimsy effort until his powerlesssness is confirmed; it means he is beaten before he begins. Let him seriously will to accomplish. Let him direct all his efforts to the correction of his mental and nervous condition and have confidence and resolution to succeed. Some people do their work three times over. Once in anticipation, once in actuality, once in rumination. The best way is "to be up and doing" instead of cultivating failure.

"I cannot" often means "I will not." Well begun is half done, and tackling a big thing confidently means almost surely that it will be accomplished.

Education consists more in the training of the will than in storing the intellect with knowledge. And the will, like so many other faculties of the human organism, grows in power, not by resting, but by use and exercise. The very intensiveness of the will to do has a great influence upon a man's life, and he not only accomplishes more but he actually lives longer. "People will rust out" and be hurt by rest much sooner than they will wear out.

An iron will is often triumphant in the contest with physical infirmity. Schiller produced his greatest tragedies in the midst of physical suffering almost amounting to torture. Beethoven was almost totally deaf and burdened with sorrow when he produced his greatest works. Bulwer

advises us to refuse to be ill, never to tell people we are ill, never to own it ourselves.

To give up in the hour of sickness leaves the patient without that stimulus of the will to get better. The will to get better—and this willing means so much—is weakened with grave results. For this reason, when two near relatives are ill at the same time, or even when two young people are injured in the same accident, it is a well-established practice if one has a change for the worse carefully to keep all knowledge of it from the other. To act differently would seriously endanger the other patient's chances of recovery. Death might ensue, not merely from shock, but also from "giving up," from ceasing to will to live.

The will to live has taken men from apparent death-beds and enabled them to perform wonderful feats of valour. When told by his physician that he must die, Douglas Jarrold said: "And leave a family

of helpless children! I won't die!" He kept his word, and lived for years.

Dying mothers have through sheer will-power lived on to get a last glance of a son or daughter, and wives have survived to see their husbands for a last parting. They kept themselves alive on their will. As soon as the active willing process ceased, as soon as there no longer existed the stimulus which aroused it, the individual in question rapidly reached the end of life.

The essential condition of regaining health consists above all in the power of willing it. When patients are hopeful and anxious to get well, they are tempted to eat properly, to get out into the air. Thus they sleep better and recovery is rapid. Hence it is that there are a great many organic diseases in which the will may serve an extremely useful purpose in the relief of symptoms. Vital energy previously bottled up is released, and this energy enables the patient to react against the disease. By an

effort of the will, physical pain can be decreased.*

What we have just said explains why all sorts of remedies, even those harmful in themselves, have enabled patients to get better merely because the taking of them added hope after hope of being cured together with the will to get better. The drugs or medicines removed obstructions which prevented the life forces from doing their work. Take alcohol, for instance, it is not a stimulant, but a narcotic. It increases the rapidity of the heart-beat, but not by direct stimulation. It affects the mechanism governing the pulsation of the heart, that mechanism which corresponds to the governor on a steam-engine. It removes anxiety which acts as a definite brake upon the resistive faculty. In pneumonia, for instance, it lifts the scare.

* We heartily recommend that excellent volume to which we are much indebted—"Health Through Will Power," by Dr. J. J. Walsh, New York. It is packed with medical wisdom.

Again, a physician visits a patient. He gives no medicines to-day, yet, the very fact of his going makes the patient feel better. He has carried with him the spirit of health; he has carried brightness of tone and disposition. His strength of character, his cool and composed manner impresses and fortifies the patient, giving him the will to annihilate pain and the strength of character to wish to achieve health.

Even in the midst of epidemics, according to many well-grounded traditions, those who are afraid contract the disease more readily and usually suffer more severely. Napoleon used to visit the plague hospitals even when the physicians dreaded to go, and he actually put his hand upon plague-stricken patients. He said that the man who was not afraid would vanquish the plague. Such a will-power is a strong tonic to the body.

"Where are you going?" the plague was asked one day by an Eastern pilgrim. "I

am going to Bagdad to kill five thousand people," came the reply. A few days later the same pilgrim met the plague returning. "You told me you were going to Bagdad to kill five thousand people," he said, "but instead you have killed fifty thousand people." "No," said the plague, "I killed only five thousand, as I told you I would do; the others died of fright."

An act of faith in the presence of the "glasses" is an intellectual act, and, as such, is largely influenced by the will.

As a rule, the scrupulous suffer from weakness of will. This may be due to physical debility since it is generally granted by psychologists that the will works better when the body is in sound health. That profound psychologist, St. Teresa. has said: "It (i.e., the soul) is affected by the weather and by variations of health, and it often finds itself without any fault on its part incapable of doing what it would like to do."

From what we have said it follows that the scrupulous of bodily indisposition should aim at physical fitness which has an immense bearing upon the strengthening of the will.

Holy Communion (to be spoken of later), it is our experience, helps the sufferer to carry out the directions of the confessor. Those experiencing any difficulty in bringing themselves to receive the Heavenly Manna should, after awakening in the morning, keep repeating to themselves: "I am going to Holy Communion, to-day. I know I am." Before Confession, those who find a difficulty in obeying the confessor should repeat at least twenty times, "I am going to obey my confessor blindly." Immediately after Confession also, the same words at least twenty times. Throughout the day, the scrupulous penitent should repeat again and again, "I am going to remove my 'black (or 'clouded') glasses.' I know I am."

There are direct methods of training the will. This should be a source of consolation to those who are inclined to be discouraged over the failure of their oft-repeated good intentions to remove the "black" or "clouded glasses."

The will is capable of attaining results which are nothing short of marvellous. At first there should be a small effort (yet ever determined), and that repeated regularly every day. Then a greater effort (yet still not difficult of execution), and so on.

Each little effort in search of this increase of will-power yields "will interest," and the latter is added to the "will-principal." This total result (principal *plus* interest) in turn yields interest, and so on.

The exercises to be undertaken should be trivial, yet clearly definite; devoid of monotony in so far as possible; varied so as to break any monotony; not difficult of execution; having for their one and only object the training of the will; moreover, useless for any other purpose.

Having succeeded, the patient will have the satisfaction of feeling that there are some things which he can do.

The confessor should give every encouragement by telling the penitent that he will eventually be cured. To tell him to the contrary would have most disastrous effects; and the penitent, we can safely assert, is far on the road to success as soon as he has the conviction he is going to get well.

We now suggest a few simple exercises to train the will. Write slowly and deliberately, twenty times a day, the words, "Day by day, I'm growing better and better." . . . Carry a chair, twenty times a day,

slowly and deliberately from one side of the room to the other and back again to its former position. . . . When putting on or leaving off one's boots, to begin with the left boot. If the right is taken off first by mistake, put it on again. After a period, alter the exercise to the right boot. . . . To walk round a table in one's room always in one direction. After period, change direction. When walking in a field, pick out one tree and stare at it, endeavouring not to notice the rest. . . . Leave a letter unopened for an hour after arrival. . . . When disinclined, write a letter carefully. Having finished it, tear it up.

Where there is energy of will there is life. Where there is not, there is faintness, helplessness, despondency.

He who does not advance, falls back. He who stops is outdistanced. He who leaves off gives up. The stationary is the beginning of the end. So we must use the will. The way to learn to run is to run.

The way to learn to swim is to swim. Will-power is developed by actual use of will-power.

By continued and strenuous efforts, repeated again and again, day by day, week by week, the will is developed. The process is a gradual one, but the acquisition of a well-developed will is worth the utmost labour it ever costs.

Holy Communion

These troubled souls must receive Our Lord daily in the Sacrament of His Love. From want of this heavenly nourishment they are perishing miserably.

"He hath done all things well," men said of Him to one another. "He hath made the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak." The whole country was astir with curiosity and hope. In vain did Jesus retire into the desert places. The people

followed, "bringing their dumb and blind and lame and maimed, and many others; and these they put down at His feet." Our Lord could not resist their faith. He could not turn away without helping such misery.

The report of these wonders spread far and wide, so that, just as the waters of the earth are drawn and held by the attraction of the moon, so men were drawn to Jesus and held by His power and sweetness. Those who came, saw what they had never known before—great love and sympathy, combined with almighty power. Is it any wonder, then, that when the human tide flowed back into the cities with its news of these things, an ever-increasing stream of the earnest or the curious or the needy flowed to Jesus, till thousands followed Him into the wilderness, without thought of their bodily needs or of their daily cares and duties?

He was never deaf to entreaty; never did He despise sinners; never did He flatter or

fawn upon the rich. All flocked to Him, especially those whose lot in life was bitter. As we draw round the fire in winter to be warmed and cheered, so these poor sufferers drew away from the cold of man's neglect to the warmth of the affectionate sympathy of Our Lord.

And in Holy Communion we receive this same loving Saviour Himself.

And from the tabernacle He yearns over us. With deepest affection He cries out to us :—" Come to me all you that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you." He does not send the hungry away fasting, as the Apostles would have done, when five thousand men, besides women and children, followed Him into the desert. " They have no need to go," He said. And He gathered them around Him, and fed them with His own Hand, and sent them home refreshed and happy.

In the same way He wants us to come and be refreshed. He sees how and where our

burden presses; He sees the weak places in our soul. He discerns our every effort and our every desire, and follows with interest our every struggle. He took a human heart, and so He knows by His own experience what we have to suffer. The sting of injustice and ingratitude, all that is bitterest in human sorrow—all these He has felt.

Consuming themselves in fruitless exertions and endless speculations, the scrupulous often abstain from this Divine Banquet; they perish from thirst, though near the fount of Living Water.

Are they to become strong by turning away from the Source of Perfection? Is not Holy Communion the Bread of Life? Ill and languid, harassed on every side by temptations surrounding them like the coils of a serpent, why do they not then touch with confidence the hem of His garment? Complaining of poverty and abandonment, weak, blind, faint, bewail-

ing their inconsistency and faults, let them seek refuge in Him who calmed the troubled billows of the sea and said to the winds, "Be still."

But they feel so cold in love, so weak in faith, so faltering in hope, so distracted that they cannot determine to draw nigh to the best and most loving Physician.

Remembering that Our Lord wills them to come, that Holy Communion is a nourishment not only for the holy and perfect, but also a source of health to the weak and languid, that it will enliven those in dejection, comfort those in anxiety, refresh the weary, instil resignation into the impatient and calmness into the fearful and afflicted, let them go forth under the banner of obedience to receive the Master.

Recourse to St. Joseph

In the Church, the garden of the Heavenly Spouse, we find many varieties of

flowers, that is to say, pious practices, corresponding with the wants of souls countless and various. Very beautiful are these flowers when approved of by Mother Church, for they are the outcome of the Spirit of God, diffusing the sweet savour of Christ, and imparting to the soul an odour of sanctity.

But as all may not be suited to every soul, each individual must make his choice according to his necessities and tastes.

Pardon us, gentle reader, if we assist you in the selection of a flower.

Little knowing the greatness of St. Joseph, we are tempted to pass him over in comparative silence. To have a heavenly protector is to the interest of every soul, but above all, of those souls tossed about on the sea of scruples. Are we not slow in recognising the wonderful power of St. Joseph? Why should not the afflicted flee to him who succoured the Mother of the Son? Why should not the saint and sinner

have recourse to him who learnt the ideals of sanctity at the Fount of Innocence? Why should not those who are about to leave this world, look upon him who departed from this life between Our Lord and Our Lady, with the sweet names of Jesus and Mary on his dying lips?

Though noble enough to protect the Infant Church, he still lived in obscurity and died unknown. Gentle protector of the Queen of Virgins, he was none the less courageous to cross the desert in flight and bear within his heart the burning, penetrating knife of exile. Exalted as he was to be the Chaste Spouse of the Queen of Heaven, in silence and obscurity he steadily worked in the carpenter's shop.

St. Teresa tells us that those who have true devotion to him do not fail to make rapid strides in virtue. She begs of all to make at least a trial of devotion to this great saint, saying that God seems to have given to other saints the power to help us in some

one necessity, but to St. Joseph the power of helping us in all.

Could we do better than recommend scrupulous penitents to ask the intercession of him who is the model of obedience, because we are firm in our belief that good St. Joseph will help them to advance rapidly to victory?

Physical Aspect of Cure

In cases where scrupulosity is accompanied by nerve trouble, it may be of service to call to our aid certain physical agents which have, at least, an indirect bearing upon the disposition of the mind.

So complex and varied are the nervous diseases, that it is well nigh impossible to lay down any special rules, but a few general remarks will be offered.

The regulations we are about to lay down, may seem somewhat crude or even childish to those having no accurate idea of nerve trouble and the woeful consequences, moral

and physical, arising therefrom. But when it is remembered that this is the treatment prescribed by nerve specialists after long years of experience and minute observation, we cannot fail to realise its importance.

With reference to the care required in regard to food, we would point out that it is a common mistake to make too great use of meat. To eat slowly, to drink water freely during meals, to abstain from stimulants—these may be followed as good general rules for all nerve patients. Though rest is required after meals for those suffering from general debility, under no pretext should sleep be permitted.

Each hour of the day should be well mapped out, thus affording the mind food for thought. Except in rare cases, we cannot too strongly recommend manual labour in the open air, but never to excess.

And here is another point which calls for distinct notice. We insist upon change from the usual surroundings of the patient

to a completely new life, free from toil and anxiety, and all this because the scene of the development of the malady cannot fail to have some effect upon him.

As regards exercises of piety, it is worthy of notice that neurotic patients are, at times, apt to deceive themselves in the belief that prayer is the only remedy calculated to bring relief to soul and body. Forgetting that "all things have their season," they are of opinion that all their leisure moments should be spent in devotional work, instead of calm and repose.

Yet this notion, we conceive, is a mistake and our present business is to show that it is one. We shall best attain our object by observing what at first sight may be an occasion of surprise or even scandal to some, that prayer often serves to increase the excitability and irritability of the patient under consideration. And we offer these remarks lest the sufferers should be surprised and discouraged at finding it so.

But our merciful Lord knows it is so, and that He knows, should be to us a thought full of comfort.

The afflicted of whom we are speaking should abstain from forcing themselves to meditate, by reason of the ensuing mental fatigue. Nor should they assist at several Masses a day, or make long visits in different churches. A few minutes' prayer at a time should suffice. And, further than this, it is of importance to remark that, in the hours of prayer, it were better for the afflicted in question to remain seated, and for this reason—because it is too trying to stand, and kneeling may interfere with the circulation of the blood.

As yet, we have not made mention of the distressing effect which may follow from even the moderate exercise of that great Christian duty, *viz.*, prayer. In cases of extreme nervous strain, no vocal prayer—be it even a Hail Mary— should be used owing to the consequent mental exhaustion. It

will be quite sufficient for the patient to restrict himself to an ejaculatory prayers which may be considered to make up for all others. This observation may be a source of surprise, but the assurance that he is under no further obligation, should have its effect upon the nervous system of the sufferer.

Nor is it accurate to maintain, as some perhaps would hold, that we can always pray as long as we are able to talk. There is, in point of fact, a vast difference between praying and talking. Prayer entails mental effort and reflection—the attention must be fixed. All this produces fatigue. It is not so with conversation nor with readings of an interesting nature.

We have laid stress upon this special treatment for neurotic patients, because there are some self-constituted physicians who would seem to decide with a word or a stroke of the pen, questions of a

nature calculated to puzzle the most learned specialist.*

And here we conclude this section of our treatise, perhaps rather abruptly, and certainly without exhausting it. We cannot hope to have covered the whole ground that it occupies, or to have done justice to those nerve specialists whose words of wisdom should minister to the mind diseased, and pluck from the heart a rooted sorrow.

* Nervous patients must aim at general fitness. Rest, fresh air, suitable diet (not mysterious mixtures), well masticated, rational physical treatment which includes deep breathing and plenty of sleep are usually sufficient to restore the mind's elasticity and strength.

A word in detail with reference to the aforementioned points!

To talk voluminously is to use up one's nerve forces. The patient should rest whenever it is possible and should never "stand about," or "loll about," when a seat is at hand. Walking is good within limits, but the patient should never undertake "long walks." When walking, he must do so with a will, but he must never saunter along aimlessly or thoughtlessly. With pleasant thoughts in his mind he should be on the look-out for things not noticed before.

It is very difficult to generalise wisely as to the kind or amount of exercise required in regard to nervous ailments. The exercises—especially abdominal ones—spoken of in our Appendix may be undertaken, we think, but with great moderation.

Sleep, "nature's soft nurse," is of immeasurable importance since it is fundamentally the builder and repairer of the nervous system. Being the nearest

approach to absolute rest, it reduces the mind's activities to a minimum; it steeps our "senses in oblivion." Indeed, sleep may be substituted for food, but drugged consciousness is not sleep.

Many say that the sleep we get when the night is fairly young is far more restorative than that which is ours when the night is far spent.

Since in many cases of nervous trouble sleep is difficult, it must be coaxed. Before retiring it were well to have thoughts tending to soothe and pacify the mind. Bad temper and excitement are poor bed-fellows for sleep. Don't retire "upset," or just after looking at the bank book. Experience has proved the following practice often very helpful—*viz.,* to repeat some such words as these :—"I am going to sleep quickly to-night; I feel certain I shall sleep." If this is not successful, rest quietly in bed, occupying the mind with pleasant thoughts. Turning about restlessly would only aggravate the nerve trouble.

It cannot be too strongly pointed out that open spaces and sunlight are excellent nerve tonics. Life in the open air aids digestion and increases appetite. The windows of a room should be open for twenty-four hours a day; wide during the summer, and during the winter a little at the top and bottom.

Too much food may cause disease of the heart, kidney and liver; it may bring on obesity, not to speak of weariness and dizziness.

Mastication of each mouthful of food, until all sense of taste is gone, is held to-day to be one of the prime factors in longevity. By eating slowly one can do with less food, and, at the same time, accumulate a greater reserve of energy. It is possible, however, as we shall show later on, for thin people to eat too slowly. We should not make eating a serious business.

Neurasthenic patients should cultivate a regular intestinal habit. Willing or unwilling, an endeavour should be made to establish regularity at a fixed time every day, preferably after breakfast. Though a mild laxative may at first be necessary, the habit will eventually be established. In this regard, abdominal exercises referred to later are most important, especially for the weaker sex. To drink a tumbler of water (hot or cold) before breakfast is very helpful. Continued use of artificial remedies may produce subsequent reaction.

The following exercise in breathing has yielded splendid results. Excellent particularly after rising.

Extend arms at right angles to the body, the hands meeting and the chest well brought out. Bringing the arms back as far as possible horizontally, breathe deeply and slowly, the breath being exhaled whilst the arms are moved forward till the hands meet. Again, raise the hands from the sides till the hands meet above the head, breathing deeply at the same time. Lower the arms into position, exhaling at the same time. Inhale through the nose. Exhale through the mouth. Inhale and exhale slowly and regularly, keeping time with the movements of the arms. Repeat exercise ten times in each position. Follow by a sponge bath, cold if possible or the nearest approach thereto. " Rub down " briskly with a rough towel.

The patient must endeavour to banish the " blues." To shrink into oneself, to live apart from our fellows, to read books tending to turn the mind in upon itself—all this is to aggravate our malady. In cases of extreme nervous strain it may be necessary for those consecrated to God in religion to omit, for a time, spiritual reading. In such cases they should not be present during this exercise, even in the refectory. When, in the case already spoken of, the saying of a Hail Mary is a strain they should not even be present during vocal prayer.

On the contrary, cheerfulness acts upon the nervous system as a lubricant upon the rusty chain of a bicycle. Laughter (not giggling or guffawing) tends to mitigate the malady under consideration, and, so long as our laughter pains no one, we are doing a healthy thing.

To dispel gloom, the sufferer should introduce bright thoughts. Hence, it is good to recall those periods when to walk and to run were for him a delight. He should say to himself very frequently—" I am cheerful. I know I am cheerful. I look cheerful. I am going to remain cheerful."

As idleness is one of the worst things possible for nerves, it were well to cultivate some hobby—*e.g.*, drawing, carpentering, collecting and classifying specimens, gardening (*but not with fatigue*). Music, too, helps to pacify and restore the minds of victims of nerve-trouble.

SOME EXAMPLES OF SCRUPLES

The snares of Satan in connection with the scrupulous are countless. So the confessor should use all possible means of inspiring confidence.

The greatness of a military leader is constituted by his power of arousing in his soldiers faith in themselves and in him as their leader. It is no wonder that generals receive so much credit for the victories won by their armies, because they have it in their power to create morale among their men, that morale which, more than anything else, means so much for victory.

To inspire confidence it were well for the Spiritual Director to anticipate—if we may so speak—the confession of those whom he suspects to be scrupulous. Before hearing their trouble, it were well for him to put

before them in advance what he thinks is, in all probability, a picture of their spiritual state, describing what might be their sufferings, their reasons for repeating their troubles in Confession, their motives for staying away from Holy Communion, etc., etc.

If the penitent is presented with a picture of the workings of his mind, he will feel he is understood. Confidence will lead to obedience. Obedience must lead to cure.

* * * *

Some are deterred from taking the remedy we prescribe because they feel that any willingness on their part to follow the broad path of completely ignoring the scruple, would point to their being wanting in conscientiousness. To these we reply that such a feeling is erroneous. There is no danger of their overstepping the mark, for, though they may safely take the book as their sole guide, the trouble is to get

them to use what may seem to them a privilege, but what is, in reality, only their due.

In some cases of extreme psychical exhaustion, the penitent must make no preparation at all for Confession. He must walk straight into the confessional and leave the rest to the director.

. . . . .

From what has been brought under our notice, it seems that some cases of Scruples have allowed themselves to be persuaded that the book was not meant for them, for they felt that they saw their own state in the section dealing with Hysteria. They were thus debarred from reading any further or, at least, from following the remedy. By reason of all this, we cannot too strongly advise our readers that the section on Hysteria is for the help of Directors only, and that no one is to regard himself as hysterical unless told so by a competent authority.

Verily, the genuinely hysterical are the last people in the world to regard themselves as such. They are usually defiant and impertinent, proud or cynical, and contradict or excuse the charges brought against them. To find them out in falsehood is only to incur their contempt. Living in a world of their own, they are too much wrapped up in themselves to take advice even dictated by long experience. Their own explanation of their illness is the only one that can appeal to them. It never occurs to them that they may be mistaken, and they will defend themselves by all sorts of lies and pleadings. For some little disappointment they resolve on committing suicide and forthwith take poison or jump into a river. If the attempt fails they are delighted to have escaped, but on the first favourable occasion they will repeat the performance. Relations and friends (if there are any) are considered of no account. To be guided by others is, to

their minds, to be treated as children, for they consider themselves old enough and intelligent enough to look after their own affairs. Extremely clever at inventing schemes to carry their wishes into effect, they become, unless guarded against, an intolerable burden to those in charge of them. In gaining their ends they stop at nothing.

Hysterical patients are usually anxious to attract attention, to be in the limelight, to be looked upon as exceptional cases deserving profound study.

There are no limits to which they will not go in their endeavour to develop symptoms calculated to attract attention. Moreover, they are extraordinarily clever in keeping people from detecting the tricks of various kinds.

Medical history furnishes us with cases of hysterical young women who put living worms into their mouths. The physician was to be led to believe that they

came from some internal complaint. It is a common device among hysterical patients to produce extraordinary temperatures either by friction of the bulb of the thermometer or by applying it to a hot water bag in the bed.*

. . . . .

It is a common temptation on the part of Satan to try to persuade the sufferer that his case is hopeless and that he might as well lead a life of abandonment, for, says the tempter, he will be lost in any case.

* From what we have said it follows that Superiors of Religious Orders cannot be too much on their guard against receiving novices of an hysterical character. but the hysterical disposition can easily elude detection. To discover the malady later on is fatal. Everyone has much to learn in diagnosing these maladies. We must always expect surprises. We must never be astonished when we are deceived by them, no matter how much we may have been on our guard. The harm hysterical subjects cause in the most fervent communities is incalculable. Little by little and without warning they sow the seeds of insubordination, disunion and general disorder. One hysterical subject is capable of destroying a whole community.

For no consideration whatsoever should people of hysterical tendencies be received even on the plea that perhaps some day they may grow better. To yield to their weepings and pitiful complaints is only to aggravate the malady. not to speak of the general upset of the whole community.

To show that the sufferer's case is by no means new (if he regards it as something worthy of special notice and receives a misplaced sympathy, it is fatal) we shall give various examples of phobias, most of which have come under our personal notice. Where the patient "feels certain," it is a sign of the presence of "black glasses." Where they are greatly agitated but not certain, the "clouded glasses" only are present. It is well to remember that if one person is cured of these maladies, others can also be cured.

Some scrupulous penitents are of such a frame of mind that if it is possible for them to regard themselves as having sinned in any matter, they look upon themselves as guilty. Their every action, their every thought—all appear "black" or "clouded."

"*A*," at the time of receiving Holy Communion, imagines (or feels certain) that there is a piece of food stuck at the back

of her throat, or she refuses to go to Holy Communion because she fears (or feels certain) that during the night she swallowed some of her hair, or that on the way to the church she swallowed some rain. She sometimes fears she has inhaled particles of food when breathing. She imagines she feels them in her throat. She may have a maid always in readiness to tell her that nothing is on her lips or in her mouth after midnight, or she is frightened to wash in the morning or touch anything damp for fear of breaking her fast. For the same reason she will not clean her teeth before Holy Communion, or, it may be, after receiving Holy Communion she imagines she sees a white spot on the floor of the church, and thus she believes she has dropped the sacred Host.

"*K*," after hearing that a building in the neighbourhood was on fire, thinks that he is responsible. The fear pursues him

until an arrest is made. On hearing of a murder in the district he begins to wonder if he is the murderer. He may even give himself up to the police. On hearing that something has been lost in the neighbourhood, he starts to wonder if he is the cause. He may even want to make good the loss.

"*X*," of the legal profession, begins to worry whether or not he took sufficient pains in defending or advising his client. Although he is painstaking, the thought of negligence haunts him by day and by night. He cannot get it out of his head that "perhaps if I had taken sufficient care," etc., etc. It is truly torture for him to have to ask another to take an oath. He fears the oath might be false, etc., etc.

"Z," the essence of good nature and charity, is ever pursued with the thought that she is always wishing harm. The more

she examines her thought, the greater is her conviction of having a spiteful tendency. She prays fervently for those whom she thinks she is is hating, but the more she prays, the greater the hypocrite she feels. If she merely makes up her mind to do anything, she feels she has bound herself under the pain of mortal sin to do it.

"*J*," an employee in a boot-shop, goes through veritable agony when selling a pair of boots. She examines the same pair again and again to see if there are any nails inside. (Before the start of the phobia she had once found a nail in a boot). She is haunted by the dread that there may be a nail which will cause blood-poisoning and then death. Thus she will be guilty of murder or, at least, manslaughter. The same person does not want to eat. She says she can't be tempted unless she exists. To take food helps her to exist, but this, she argues, will mean that she will make it

possible for herself to be tempted. Thus, to her mind, to eat is the occasion of sin. Therefore she starves herself.

"*T*" thinks she is bound in conscience to pick up orange peels or banana skins on the pathway. If she fails to do so, she begins to worry lest anybody may have, through her sinful negligence, slipped and have broken a leg. This worry is stronger with regard to peels and skins near a river or a canal. Neglect on her part might mean, she thinks, a subsequent death by drowning. Hence her worry! She once refused an alms to a beggar, a total stranger to her. Next day she hears of the finding of a dead body in the local river. She is convinced it must be the beggar, who through her want of generosity committed suicide.

"*L*" is continually wondering why water is wet, and why the leaves of trees are nearly always green. Moreover, he has

a dread of pouring water down a sink. If he does pour it down, he begins to follow it in spirit through its various courses. He feels that when it reaches the river it may be frozen; children will skate on this ice; the ice may break, and he will be the cause of their being drowned. Seeing a notice in the street he doubts whether he has read it right. He retraces his footsteps again and again, but the doubts only increase.

"*O*" dotes over her baby, but day and night she is haunted with the fear that she is going to kill it. She fears she will strike its head upon the corner of a table near which she is holding it. She puts the baby to bed, carefully closes the window, and leaves the room. The fear begins to haunt her that the window is not properly fastened. She comes back again and again to make sure all is well. She grows more restless with each return. She feels certain

that any omission to return would be nothing short of criminal negligence.

"*M*" is haunted with most blasphemous thoughts with reference to Our Blessed Lord and Our Blessed Lady. To look even at holy pictures, statues, and crucifixes occasions the most hideous mental images. Manifestation of conscience in the tribunal of Confession is truly a dilemma—if she doesn't disclose her state of mind, she feels she is making a bad confession, that she is cheating God by having things both ways; if she tells her worries, she feels her motive is sinister. Having heard in a sermon the different ways of offending Our Lord, she begins to think that at some time or other she must have committed those sins. Consequently she wants to mention them for, at least, safety sake.

"*N*" is sent to post a letter. He keeps on returning to the letter-box to make sure

it has not been dropped on the way, but he is never satisfied. After leaving the confessional, he begins to doubt whether or not he has been to Confession.

"*W*" notices while she is paying a bill that a Mrs. X. is also settling an account. The fear grows that she took the money from Mrs. X's purse, which was open at the time. On entering the kitchen after Friday's dinner, she imagines she sees the remainder of meat on the dishes. She begins to fear that she may have caused others to break the fast.

"*V*" meets another (a complete stranger) in mourning. Immediately he begins to doubt whether or not he has been the cause of the death of the deceased in question. Or, passing along the road he sees someone standing on the edge of a river. After a while he begins to wonder if he has pushed him into the water. He returns,

but seeing no sign of the object of his search, he begins to fear he has committed murder.

"*D*," after she has bought an article, begins to fear that she has not paid the money in full. Although she counts and recounts her money, she does not get peace of mind. Thus she begins to think that she is in the possession of money not her own.

"*P*" goes to the church for the purpose of making her confession, but she can't drag herself even to enter the confessional.

"*K*" goes to Confession, but she can't bring herself even to start to tell her sins. Or, she does something which she thinks needs an apology. She takes up a pen to write the apology to her absent friend, but finds she cannot even begin the first word.

"*S*" is continually washing the furniture in her home lest others be infected by

microbes. Whilst in a chemist's shop she brushed up against a packet of arsenic. She endeavours to avoid communication with others lest they be poisoned and die.

"*E*" went to the Christian Scientists to receive relief of her nerve trouble. Remorse of conscience haunts her for what she has done. She discards the clothes she wore on that occasion. She throws out all articles of furniture touched by those clothes. She feels bound to avoid all those who sat on chairs she occupied when wearing those garments.

"*F*," when out walking, brushed up against a mad dog. At once he begins to think that he has been bitten. Not content with one examination, he is continually looking to see if he bears any sign of the bite. The moment he sees a dog he gets out of the way with all possible haste, because he fears that if the dog happened

to have rabies even the wind might carry the dreaded infection to him.

"*I*" fears to give pennies to pay her fare in the tram. She thinks these may be bent and may be used for the gas-meter. Then an obstruction may be caused with a consequent explosion.

"*H*" fears to go to Mass on a Sunday. A voice seems to be continually saying to her, "You are going to shout. You are going to scream. You are going to blaspheme God." She spends most of the day arguing with herself whether her actions (even the simplest) were done to please God or the devil.

"*Q*" imagines she misses Sunday Mass by wilful distraction. Week day Mass is no worry to her. Sunday Mass is the torture. She wants to return to another Mass, but her confessor forbids her. If she obeys she thinks her motive is one of laziness.

She thinks that she wilfully caused distraction to others that they might miss Mass. She thinks she receives Holy Communion just to be seen by others.

. . . . .

In some cases the devil may act upon the sufferers in a most unusual manner. He may, without the patient's consent, bring about an irregular act such as a blasphemous utterance or a gesture of contempt for a holy picture. Satan may carry his power to such an extent that the subjects have not only the thought of committing suicide, but —although it is not eventually executed— even begin to put the intention into execution. He may appear to the sufferers under terrifying forms. They may have to endure the noise of cries, of all kinds of uproar, of blasphemies and obscene words. He may even beat or bite them unmercifully.

Some of the above-mentioned cases were suffering from neurotic maladies. They were subject to feelings of fatigue and were

incapable of effort. The least exertion exhausted their limited supply of energy and left them in a state of complete inactivity. They had a dread of heat or cold. Headaches were, perhaps, constant but variable in kind. Often it seemed as though the head were incased in a helmet. At one time they complained of burning heat; at another of intense cold. Often pain was felt all down the spine, in the small of the back, or in the loins, and the patients began to believe that they were attacked by some disease of the spinal cord. Although the organs of their bodies were in perfect condition, they said it was impossible not to have some lesion. The eyes were painfully affected by any bright light, and even a slight noise caused a sudden start. The slightest odours were disliked, and perfumes were simply held in horror. The mere contact of clothes was sufficient to cause real pain. As was to be expected, insomnia was a symptom. They were ever

unstable, restless, always brooding over their sickness. No matter how often they changed their abode they felt that they would find relief in surroundings other than where they actually were. Their whole frame seemed charged with electricity. Some victims would go several times in the one day to a doctor for advice, but would come away because they could not make up their minds to knock. Others would go but would lack the courage to tell the object of their visit.

It is needless to point out that these sufferers, especially the more intelligent persons, feel their state keenly. Forming a class quite apart, they regard themselves as black men among the whites. Owing to a feeling of disgust for life they would willingly welcome its end, because they can see for themselves only a general break-up. Suicide may seem the only way out of the trouble, and the thought of it haunts them day and night.

In treating phobias (dreads) the confessor must combine gentleness with firmness. He must teach the patients to ignore their trouble. It is so much waste of time to teach scrupulous penitents the conditions necessary to commit sin. They will begin to feel they have fulfilled all those conditions. It is useless to ask them if they are certain as to their motives, etc. The confessor must point out to them that they are "seeing" things through the wrong "glasses"; that, to remove the malady, they must do the opposite to what they feel they are bound to do. A bad habit is corrected by occupying the mind with other thoughts and by doing acts in the contrary direction.

Misplaced sympathy weakens the will; it keeps it from exerting its full influence in maintaining vital resistance; it relaxes not only the moral but also the physical fibre of men and women. Sympathy must be employed in treating phobias, but with

nicety of judgment. The advice to do the next best thing and not to cry over spilt milk is ever so much better than the sentimental recalling of the past.

"Why don't you laugh?
Don't let your spirits wilt;
Don't sit and cry
Because the milk you've spilt;
If you would mend it now,
Pray let me tell you how:
Just milk another cow!
Why don't you laugh!"

It was fatal during the war to allow soldiers suffering from "shell-shock" to tell over and over again how their condition developed. Frequent medical examination, frequent repetition of stories, added more and more suggestive elements to the condition of the patients.

Phobias have an analogy in bodily pains. To concentrate on a phobia is to

make it worse. And to dwell on pain, to anticipate, to note the first sensations that occur—all this multiplies the painful feeling. The turning of the attention to something else can greatly diminish or even abolish pain. It is a well known fact that headaches disappear when there is an alarm of fire. *

Those suffering from phobias should never admit defeat. Let them step bravely forward. The difficulties they meet with will resolve themselves as they advance. Let them put forth their whole energy and light will dawn and shine with increasing clearness in their path.

* In all cases of phobias the sufferers shou'd endeavour to act as others of a normal temperame.t act in like circumstances. It is useless to ask the scrupulous if they are certain as to their motives. If they are wearing "black glasses," they will "see" their motives as grievously sinful. If they are wearing "clouded glasses," for safety sake, they may confess their intentions as grievously sinful, or they may say they are not sure. Then they will begin to worry whether they have answered rightly or wrongly. All this questioning and examining and worrying only serves to aggravate the malady.

THE HAVEN OF PEACE

There are those who, having once enjoyed peace of mind, ask wistfully if never again it is to return. Surely, they say, there can be no dawn after such a night; no joy will ever spring through such sorrow; no strength after such weakness!

If the patient maintains a cautious adherence to the whole of the doctrine herein laid down, and a regard for the statements we have made, signs of cure will soon appear, not to make him fix the day, for that is hidden, but to show him it is coming. Day after day goes on; the patient knows not when the hour is come. He lingers, gets better, relapses—it is a mere matter of time.

The malady, though not altogether defunct, is, as it were, on its death bed. We suppose, indeed, that it will not die with-

out some violence even yet, without convulsions. Satan, it is to be expected, will renew his persecution of craft and subtlety. He may adopt the most alarming weapons of deceit. We know he has done much in this way in the past. It is his policy to divide confessor and penitent, to dislodge the latter from off the rock of security and obedience.

The afflicted soul may have misgivings at times. He may have almost insuperable objections. Hence it is that, calm as may be the sky, and gentle the breezes, he cannot trust the morning; as long as the "glasses" have not been permanently removed, at any moment the storms of temptation may arise and scatter confusion through the quiet home of his life. Still, in spite of such objections, in spite of the assaults of unbelief in the presence of this colouring medium, he will eventually come to see that in this course alone can peace be obtained. He has seen it nowhere else.

The hours of the "glasses" are numbered. A time will come when a sudden gust of new objections, a sudden inroad of new perplexities, shall not unsettle him. The malady passes away to make room for peace of mind. This latter is surely hastening on, whether it comes sooner or later.

Such reflections as these should act as a stimulus to the scrupulous soul to follow the guide blindly. Surely with this prospect before him, he cannot bear to give himself up to the thought of discouragement!

So, courage, poor afflicted patient! We have sown, we trust, the seed of cure, and the young plant, watered by the grace of the Sacraments and moistened by the dew of blind obedience, will not fail to blossom into fairest flower and richest fruit.

FINIS.

APPENDIX

PHYSICAL FITNESS

It may be asked how the growth of Scruples may be prevented, or, at least, interfered with, particularly amongst those whose lives are consecrated to God. Physical fitness acts in no small way as an antidote to the microbe of scrupulosity, so we should all aim at physical fitness, and this for more than one reason.

We may have high ideals, but in our endeavours to live up to these noble standards, we may be depriving ourselves of our necessary share of food, sleep, and recreation. We forget that to neglect the body and yet to expect it to co-operate with the soul (of which it is the instrument), is to expect work from a horse that we refuse to feed.

In our endeavour to cover distances in the shortest space of time, we jump on a car when we should walk, and, in general, we strive to avoid all unnecessary exertion.

If we look down the vista of ages we shall see that most men who really counted in shaping the history of the world were strong in body as well as in mind. An eminent doctor has said that to attain success and length of service in any of the professions, a vigorous body is well-nigh essential.

It is not otherwise with those spiritual world forces, not only among those dedicated to the active life, but also among those following the path of contemplation.

It was far-seeing wisdom which prompted a servant of God to write :—" An ounce of sanctity with exceptionally good health of body does more for the saving of souls than striking sanctity with an ounce of health."

St. Teresa said to her spiritual children, " Take the greatest care of your health; take everything necessary to give you relief." Again, " If the health is ruined, how is the Rule to be followed?"

In a word, with a sound mind in a sound body there is every opportunity for building up a solid, spiritual edifice. Better far to kill one's self-will than one's body! If the machine of the body breaks down, no small time will be spent in repairing it. Indiscreet penance may leave the will weaker than straw. Even a slight indisposition may easily end in serious illness.

There is another consideration for those in religion. One member being unable to do his (or her) duty, another must step into the breach, not to speak of the extra work put upon the infirmarian. St. Teresa said to those of her subjects who were inclined to indiscretion in penance and prayer, " Sleep well, eat well. It is infinitely more pleasing to God to see a convent of quiet and healthy children who do what they are told than a mob of hysterical young woman who fancy themselves privileged."

CHEERFULNESS.

It is better to keep people strong and healthy instead of attempting to make them well after disease and sickness have come upon them.

No one can deny the effect of the mind upon the body, for mind acts upon body as body acts upon

mind. The various mental states, conditions, and passions have their various peculiar effects upon the body.

Someone brings you sad news. At once you grow pale, tremble, or perhaps fall into a faint. The news has been imparted to you through the channel of the mind. You are sitting at table and a friend says to you something unkind. You are hurt by the remark. You have been enjoying your dinner, but from that on your appetite is gone.

In this hurrying, grasping, competing age we should get rid of all irritants, of everything that worries and frets and brings discord into so many lives.

Life's delicate bearings should not be carelessly ground away for mere lack of oil. Cheerfulness is this oil. It has a wonderful lubricating power. It lengthens the life of human machinery as lubricants lengthen the life of mechanical contrivances.

We should aim at the habit of cheerfulness—a calm, sweet soul-contentment, and inward peace. We should try to enjoy every day as we go along, for it is a mistake to fret and stew all the week and then expect to make up for it on Sunday or some holiday. Petty vexations, insignificant anxieties and fears, scolding and complaining about the weather and the adversity of inanimate things, the little daily dyings—all these things cloud over the sunshine of life and destroy our mental elasticity without advancing our life-work one inch. It is disastrous to try to grasp too much of life at once, because, after all, life is a mosaic, and each tiny piece must be cut and set with skill, first one piece and then another.

The habit of hearty laughter should be cultivated, for if everybody knew the power of laughter as a

health tonic and life prolonger, many physicians would find their occupation gone. Laughter is Nature's device for exercising the internal organs and for giving us pleasure at the same time. It accelerates the respiration, and gives warmth and glow to the whole system; it expands the chest, and makes the blood course merrily along. There is no table sauce like laughter at meals, for it is the great enemy of dyspepsia. Grim care, moroseness, anxiety—all are removed by the oil of mirth. Cheerfulness has been observed to be of more value for patients than anything to be obtained at the apothecary's.

"Why don't you laugh?
'Twill ever help to soothe
The aches and pains.
No road in life is smooth;
There's many an unseen bump,
And many a hidden stump
O'er which you'll have to jump—
Why don't you laugh?"

The "lemon-squeezers" of society live in Grumbling Street. They ever hang dismal pictures on their wall; they predict evil; they extinguish the light of hope and see only the worst side of things. They are waggons without springs, jolting over every cobble. They are ever scanning the world for clouds not yet in sight. To them the air is bad, and the house is bad; the water is bad; the world is out of joint; everything is cross-grained.

A cheerful optimistic temperament is worth everything. The cheerful man lives on Thanksgiving Avenue where the air is pure, the sun shines all day long, and the birds are ever singing. He

ever looks on the bright side of things; is ever ready to snatch victory from defeat. In fine, he is the successful man.

It is a good sign when girlish voices carol over the steaming dish-pan or the mending basket; when the broom moves rhythmically and the duster flourishes in time to some brisk melody. We are sure the dishes shine more brightly, and that the sweeping and mending and dusting are more satisfactory because of this running accompaniment of song.

Fear and worry have the effect of closing up the channels of the body so that the life forces flow in a slow and sluggish manner. Fear and worry are most expensive guests to entertain. Fear paralyses healthy action; worry corrodes and pulls down the organism.

> "Some of your griefs you have cured,
> And the sharpest you still have survived;
> But what *torments of pain* you endured
> From evils that never arrived!"

Anger, jealousy, malice, continual fault-finding —all have their own peculiar corroding, weakening, tearing-down effects. The mechanical effect of worry is much the same as if the skull were laid bare and the brain exposed to the action of a little hammer beating continually upon it night and day, until the membranes are disintegrated and the normal functions disabled.

Indeed, in more than one instance, a single night of mental agony has wrecked a life. Grief, long-standing jealousy, constant care and corroding anxiety tend to develop insanity. Sick thoughts and discordant moods are the natural atmosphere of disease.

There have been several well-authenticated cases of the following nature. A mother has been dominated for a few moments by an intense passion of anger, and the child at her breast has died within an hour's time. The mother's milk had become poisoned by virtue of the poisonous secretions of the system while under the domination of this fit of anger.

Scientists have discovered that there is a chemical difference between ordinary perspiration and that sudden, cold exudation of a person under a deep sense of guilt.

So the scrupulous should aim at brightness of disposition. Healthy thoughts are as essential to healthy bodies as pure thoughts are to a holy life. Bright thoughts have a life-giving, health engendering influence over the body. They beautify the countenance, enrich the voice, and make one more attractive in every way.

Let us take a few paragraphs from that unique book *The Living Sisters of the Little Flower.** They are part of a conversation of Pauline with the author :—

> " Often, when I was in the streets of the town with little Thérèse, the passers-by would turn fascinated to look long at the Little Flower, not so much because of her physical beauty, but because of the celestial charm that seemed to radiate from her person."

*The Living Sisters of the Little Flower by Rev. Albert Dolan, O.C.C., Carmelite Press, 6401-6413 Dante Avenue, Chicago.

Father Dolan is the director of the largest organization in the world in honour of the Little Flower. Through his work and writings Father Dolan is acclaimed as the foremost living authority on Saint Thérèse. It is doubtful if any other man in the world to-day has talked with so many who knew the Little Flower in l

Again—

> "The most remarkable feature of her appearance was a certain expression on her countenance, an expression of charm and serenity and heavenly peace which impressed all, even from her girlhood."

Those wrapped only in the thoughts of their own ailments, sorrows, woes, receive and give no joy, no hope, no courage from or to those coming in contact with them. On the contrary, they suggest and help to intensify in many those mental states only too prevalent in human life.

Those who think least of their bodies enjoy as a rule the best of health. To talk of sickness and disease is to do oneself harm, and harm also to those who listen. One can be playful and cheerful without being puerile or silly. There is nothing but ill resulting from the permanent mood of sadness. To talk of things that will make others better for listening is to infect them with health and strength and not with weakness and disease.

> "Talk health. The dreary, never-changing tale
> Of mortal maladies is worn and stale.
> You cannot charm or interest or please,
> By harping on that minor chord, disease.
> Say you are well, or all is well with you,
> And God shall hear your words and make them true."

The world has been called a looking-glass that gives back the reflection of one's own face. If you frown at it, it will look sourly upon you. Laugh at it, and it is a jolly companion.

" Growl, Spitfire & Co." wonder why they fail, while " Messrs. Merriman & Warmheart " succeed.

Hatred begets hatred; hatred and malice corrode and wear down the body. Love inspires love; love and goodwill stimulate and build up the body. To meet hatred with hatred is to gain nothing; it is to lose everything; it is to add fuel to a flame already kindled; it is to degrade oneself. To meet hatred with love is to elevate not only yourself but also the one who bears you hatred. You can " get even " with another in two ways, either by stooping to his level (by revenge) or by elevating him to yours (by love). If you are prepared to stoop to his level, then there is something in you deserving of his hatred.

He is truly to be envied who believes there is a remedy for every wrong; who believes the best of everybody, and who sees beauty and grace where others see only deformity.

There is a deep scientific principle under lying the precept—if you would have all the world love you, you must first love all the world.

EXERCISE.

Nowhere, perhaps, as in the matter of physiology is a little knowledge such a dangerous thing. In truth there is a great danger in paying too much attention to medical advertisements. Some need only a little knowledge of their internal economy to make them worry about it.

Our organs are thoroughly capable of caring for themselves if we only have sufficient air and exercise together with good plain food and adequate diversion of mind.

Our dreads and worries about our organs impair their functions, and leave them less fitted to resist infection when they occur. Moreover, these dreads use up our vital energy.

It would seem that a great many people are intent upon making themselves miserable. Medicines are taken to relieve the symptoms we detect, but the medicines usually do more harm than good. It has been rightly said that if all the medicines that had been taken had been thrown into the sea, it would have been much better for mankind but worse for the fish.

We cannot insist too much upon life in the open. Many persons whose lives have been full of worries, who spend no small amount of time going from one dread to another, will find that most, if not all, of these feelings will disappear when they begin to live more in the open.

Many an octogenarian and nonagenarian has attributed his good health and long life to regular exercise in the open air.

To walk to business in the morning instead of riding in a crowded tram or train would be a far

better beginning or ending to the day's work—and this, too, where people are standing all day, for this latter is very depressing to circulation. True it is that at the beginning there may be some feeling of tiredness, but this will soon be replaced by a healthy feeling of satisfaction.

We have no tonic to equal the effect of a brisk walk in the bracing air on a cold, dry day. The brisk walking causes the breathing to be deeper, and the liver, with other abdominal viscera, is massaged. It will throw off the feeling of sluggishness and that lack of appetite consequent upon life indoors. The jolt to which the body is subjected while walking is an antidote to constipation.

We should walk at least three miles every day. More especially when we have many indoor anxieties and worries we should make our recreation a brisk, refreshing walk. We waste many hours indoors which could be set aside for outdoor exercise. This time spent out of doors would help us to do very satisfactory work in the ensuing hours. Moreover, instead of dozing after dinner in the evening, there should be an outing before bedtime except in very inclement weather.

Want of walking is, in the case of women, greatly responsible for nervous complaints. Regular walking greatly diminishes troubles recurring at the change of life. Walking should be gradually increased from two miles a day to four. Where there is no organic heart trouble (and only a physician can detect this), feelings of discomfort in the region of the heart usually disappear under the effect of walking.

AIR.

Air before meals is an incentive to appetite. Before breakfast there should be a brisk walk in the open. Even a cold shower is an excellent preparation for the morning meal. Ten minutes' walk in the open is regarded as the best possible tonic before any meal. To remain in bed till the last moment and then rush down to breakfast is disastrous, for it is always better to be methodical rather than to risk hurt from the hours we borrow from our sleep and food. Plenty of fresh air, even without exercise, is an excellent appetiser, as is shown by life on board ship. The appetite is whetted to an extraordinary degree.

FOOD.

In the matter of food, appetite may be taken as the best guide for those who are in perfect physical condition and live in the open, gaining an abundance of fresh air and exercise. But this does not apply to those whose condition of living is unnatural and artificial, where sedentary occupation compels them to live indoor. These latter either eat too little or they eat too much, owing to stimulation of appetite in various ways. If we only insist on taking enough outdoor exercise, and if our food is simple, there is no danger of over-eating.

For good health what is needed is not over-anxiety in the selection of food but out-of-door exercise.

It was an old idea prevalent among physicians that Nature was to be corrected. Now the aim of physicians is to follow Nature as closely as possible, to assist her in every way, and to depend upon the

instincts and appetite of mankind as the most infallible guide in the matter of eating. When people have no organic disease and are in reasonably good health, instinct will direct them best as to what they should eat or avoid eating. To eat what you like is a far safer guide than any amount of physiological knowledge.

Strange as it may seem, insufficient eating either in quantity or variety is a very frequent cause of indigestion, and since the stomach and intestines are not so full as they ought to be, gas finds its way in from the vascular gastro-intestinal walls.

We must emphasise the importance of eating such stimulant materials as are provided by fresh natural foods.

Health is not so much a question of eating a great amount of food as it is a question of the quality of food partaken. We must have sufficient nutriment to supply the necessary stimulus for vitality.

Many of the old rules with reference to eating are now regarded as out of date. Listen to Dr. J. J. Walsh in his excellent work *Eating and Health*, a work we cannot too strongly recommend, not only to the scrupulous and nervous, but to all classes, young and old, without exception. To this veritable gold mine of commonsense we are gratefully indebted for many an idea in the matter of how to eat so as to secure good health.

We quote from Dr. Walsh a few of his "Modern Rules of Eating for Health":

> "Eat when you feel like it."
>
> "Eat what you like."
>
> "Do not be afraid of eating between meals, provided you do not disturb the appetite for your regular meal."

"Be sure you eat some raw things every day; they are extremely important. The coarser they are the better."

"Never get up from the table feeling hungry. The old-fashioned rule in this matter has no more sense that if we were to say, 'Wash your hands, but leave them dirty.'"

"Most of the indigestion physicans see is above the neck, not below it."

"The one supremely indigestible thing is the human mind. When you get your mind on your stomach you cannot digest it off. You must lift it off."

If you like a food, it is a sign that is of value to you, and the ordinary foods (i.e., the staple articles, but not the special additions to diet) liked by the majority of mankind are good for most people. They may disagree owing to some accidental circumstance or to the fear they will disagree. It must be shown definitely that the dislike is objective and not in the mind only. We cannot take notice of feelings in the matter of food idiosyncrasy. We must be careful with regard to limiting simple nutritious foods. We must not try to persuade ourselves that we are different from others. Feelings have deceived too many people. If the article of food produces a rash, if it causes difficult asthmatic breathing, we may eliminate it, but only for a while. Even vomiting may be due to something accidental.

Restrictions in the selection of food is almost sure to bring weakness, if not sickness. "Beauty," says Dr. Walsh, "as expressed in a healthy complexion is the result of variety, not limitation, in diet." To his patients who said that they dieted because

they suffered from indigestion, Dr. Austin Flint used to point out to them it was the other way about. " Oh, no !" he invariably answered, " that is the reason why you suffer from indigestion (i.e., because they dieted)."

LIQUIDS.

It is said that seven-eighths of the human body is liquid, and medical science advises us to drink about three quarts of fluid every day to run our internal economy. Pure water is invaluable. It is said that no other single substance is known to be such a " cure-all " of human ills. Except in the case of those who are over-weight, it should be used plentifully at every meal, but the food should not be " washed down." A moistened meal is more readily digested than a dry one. Cold water before a meal (except in the case of some delicate people) is an excellent tonic. It tones up the stomach. Hot water (with a little salt) is excellent before breakfast, but not lukewarm water. This latter tends to produce flabbiness.

We should endeavour to eat in agreeable company. Worry produces gas. If we are worried, our systems will not present their needs as they should. We should leave all our anxieties and worries outside the door. " If you mix your ideas with your food," says Dr. Walsh, " it is very hard to digest food properly." So, eating should not be made a serious business. It is possible for thin people to eat too slowly. Through lagging behind, they may, from mere shyness, get up from the table dissatisfied.

If we do not distribute our food equally over the day, our store of energy will run down. If there

is too big an interval since the last substantial meal, the stomach may be weakened, and we may find it difficult to manage the last evening meal.

Moreover, too long a delay between meals, e.g., six hours, often causes headaches which are erroneously regarded as due to heart trouble or Bright's disease. Again, when we are very tired and hungry, we should not eat to our full capacity; we should take something light, and, after some little time, a full meal; because digestion is not good if there is that "played-out" feeling.

A substantial breakfast is an excellent preparation for the making of a good midday meal, and both are a good preliminary for the evening meal. To eat scantily is a bad preparation for the following meal.

When some hours—four or five—have elapsed since the last meal, something should be eaten before retiring, because retiring at night with a hungry feeling is often the cause of insomnia, not so much for the first few hours as early in the morning. As Dr. Walsh puts it, in *Health through Will-Power*:

> "There is a sense of gone-ness in the stomach region in these cases, which the patients are prone to attribute to their nerves in general, or some of them who have had unfortunate suggestions from their physicians may talk of their abdominal brain; but it is surprising how often their feelings are simply due to emptiness."

We should aim at variety in food, i.e., just as we change our clothing according to the season, we should also change our food. In winter we should take food that will give heat; in autumn and spring, energy-producing foods; in summer, cooling foods.

Before meals we should wash our hands thoroughly. Diseases of the throat and upper air passages are caused by infection. Microbes are often caught by the tonsils and the ring of glandular tissue at the back of the throat. Microbes are living things and, under favourable conditions, they double every half-hour. This means that at the end of twenty-four hours they amount to trillions.

Hands play an important part in the development of such respiratory diseases as influenza, coughs, and colds. It is very dubious whether such diseases spread through the air.

If we chew our food well, it will be prepared for stomach digestion. Chewing liberates saliva from six glands. Since this saliva is alkaline in character and seeing that most germs will not live in alkaline solution, the chewing saves the teeth and tonsils from infection of microbes. Unfortunately, most foods are so prepared that they require little chewing.

It is not long since tonsils were regarded as among the useless organs. The tonsils are really sentinels that guard the portal of entry to the digestive and respiratory tracts. When bacteria are not killed in the mouth by the antiseptic salivary secretion already spoken of, the task of destroying these germs is thrown upon the tonsils. The latter prove ineffective for the task, with the result that abscesses are formed in the tonsils, behind the tonsils, and under the tonsils. From these affections follow heart and ear trouble, and even meningitis and peritonitis. Rheumatism, too, arises, though it is often erroneously supposed to be due to the over-eating of meat or the consumption of various supposed acid foods.

In the matter of weight, an adult should weigh about two-and-a-half pounds to the inch, and an adult female two-and-a-quarter pounds to the inch.

The increase in weight should be gradual. This will allow the equal distribution of flesh all over the body.

Except in the case of organic disease (and with thin people organic troubles are very rare), it is a practical rule that those of underweight owe their condition to not eating enough and not to heredity, as is falsely supposed.

Lack of weight means lack of energy to face the irritations of life; those who are wanting in weight are tired towards evening; they do not sleep well.

Increase of weight brings with it the ability to do things which had become irksome; it will help to dispel nervous fears (and these are more common among those of underweight than among the normal); it will dispel tired feelings, presupposing (and a doctor alone can tell) that these are not due to heart or kidney trouble.

Thin people should eat everything they like and plenty of it, and more than before. They should take plenty of cream, milk, fats, olive oil, rice, macaroni, potatoes, eggs. Unfortunately, milk, butter, and eggs are often curtailed or completely eliminated owing to the imaginary difficulty of digestion. These things can be taken in spite of vomiting which is merely subjective, except, of course, where there is a definite objective sign of indigestion.

Thin people should drink milk in between meals. A glass of good fresh milk is equivalent in food value to two eggs and a piece of bread and butter. No wonder that, under "Eating Rules for the Thin," Dr. J. J. Walsh says:

> "Drink milk freely. (But it disagrees! With a very few—not more than one in ten thousand. Do not forget that every human being lived exclusively on milk for six months, and doubled in weight during that period)."

In *Health Through Will-Power*, Dr. J. J. Walsh, speaking of failure to eat as being a predisposing factor to tuberculosis, says:

> "There are certain elements in the make up of the tubercle bacillus which favour its growth at a time when fat is being lost from the tissues rather than deposited, for at that time more fat for the growth of the tubercle bacillus is available in the lungs than at any other times."

It is held in medical circles that more than ninety per cent. of humanity have had at some time in life a tuberculosis affection, but only one in nine have died from the disease. The others have all recovered from it. It was once supposed that heredity played an important part in the spreading of the disease, but it is now regarded as having almost nothing to do with the spread of the affection. Family habits of under-nourishment bring on loss of weight; and proneness to underweight leaves us more liable to infection.

In the matter of restrictions it is difficult to lay down any rules. If it is a case of diabetes, the subject must avoid sugar. If it is a case of overweight, then the person concerned must avoid fats.

When it is a case of reducing, those of overweight should not lose more than one pound a week. It is dangerous to lose more than this, because fat is only slowly absorbed, and important organs of the

body may be called upon. Those of overweight can eat food which is bulky but, at the same time, non-nutritious. It were well for them to eat a little less of each article of food.

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It may be of service to add a few words with reference to mental homes.

It cannot be denied that many an inmate of a mental home was, in the beginning of his illness, only a case of Scruples. Indeed, it is our experience that some have been confind to asylums although suffering from Scruples only. Good food, fresh air, bodily occupation, complete ignoring of the scruple, daily Holy Communion—all this would soon have restored the mental equilibrium.

We are too much inclined to relegate to mental homes those suffering from delusions. (We are not speaking, of course, of those who are a decided menace to themselves or to others around). After they are committed to a mental home, their condition is usually aggravated.

The ordinary hospital carefully treats each kind of disease, but in some asylums the treatment meted out to the insane poor consists of routine drugging, etc., prescribed indiscriminately, and this treatment is usually grossly abused. The cure of patients is, for the most part, left to chance.

Indiscriminate herding together is fatal. It is disastrous, for instance, to put a melancholic patient (from a refined home) suddenly in the midst of mental cases of all kinds—some violent, some of the lowest social rank.

Manual labour in the open would mean so much towards recovery—but what do we find? Not only

is there usually absence of treatment, but often the hardships to be endured are heartrending—the nerve-racking cries, the dirt and general gloom, the dreary exercise yard, the poor and monotonous diet, the hideous clothing, the uncongenial companions, the total absence of recreation, the want of occupation.

To avoid the stigma of having been an inmate of an asylum, some patients are put into private nursing homes. Here they may have the advantage of better food, but the deplorable lack of occupation (and occupation is present in some general asylums) aggravates their malady by giving them too much time for brooding over their troubles.

. . . .

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT.

The body should be developed, and being the instrument of the soul, trained to help us to do God's holy work. Lack of exercise makes our muscles feeble. We must strive by dint of persistent effort to gain physical energy and fitness, and this latter will surely keep the soul in a fit condition for prayer. By regular systematic exercise, we should endeavour to gain healthy heart and lung action, to produce strong, healthy muscles, all of which will open up the pores, tone up the body, clear the mind; in a word, it will set the blood coursing through our system and make us fresh and vigorous for God's holy work.

We should have no more flesh than God intended for our bodies, and every ounce should be a working ounce. An increase of weight inclines towards decrease of activity. We should always aim at a

decrease of the waist and an increase of the chest. A hollow chest is no infallible sign of sanctity, nor is a bent head a sure proof of contemplation.

It is far better in the case of physical training to combine the exercise with pleasure. There is danger that the exercises, unless combined with sport, will grow monotonous, and for the least excuse be omitted.

Games which require much bending—backward, forward, and sideways—are excellent. Thus hand-ball is invaluable.

An ordinary large association football is very good for lung exercise. Various games with it will suggest themselves. Holding the ball in both hands (full arms' length) throw with strong jerk to left, or right, or over the head. Standing one behind the other, bend to the ground with ball; then rising, throw it over the head.

A few hints on exercise! We must not expect to undo in a week the accumulated ills of years of neglect. Perhaps only after months will there be any visible signs of progress. So there must be determined, persevering effort done with enjoyment, because an exercise looked upon as a delight is more beneficial than one regarded as a hardship. With mind fixed upon the developing of the part of the body in need of attention, the exercises should be done regularly, slowly, steadily, without jerking; with thoroughness (slack movements are useless); all the while with regular breathing. It were well to exercise to perspiration point. To reduce weight, it were advisable to wear extra clothing to promote freer perspiration. After mental fatigue consequent upon study it were well to take the first few days of vacation "quietly."

In walking or sitting, we should not allow the

abdomen to sag forward, nor the head to hang upon the chest, nor the shoulders to droop, but the chest should be in position, that is, it should be raised by means of the muscles of the chest and sides. Leaving all cares at home, we should walk at a quick lively stride at a fairly brisk pace, but not against time. This is more valuable than a lazy saunter. Skipping, stationary running (with high-knee action) cannot be too much commended. Keep position throughout.

A hot bath—but not too long, for that would be weakening—usually helps one to feel rested after laborious exercise. A cold bath (but never when we are over-heated) is an excellent tonic; it strengthens the skin, and makes us less liable to take cold. It should be short, and always followed by a brisk rub with a rough towel. For a cold sponge bath (it is within reach of all) it is better to wet, and then dry, one area of the body before proceeding to another. Moreover, it is advisable to commence with the hands and face.

A good confession is sometimes an astonishing preliminary to a rapid return to health.

Now for the exercises! They may be got in any book on physical culture. Whilst exercising, we must ever observe the "position" already spoken of.

Grasping an imaginary rubber ring in front of the chest, pull slowly and strongly, simultaneously rising on the toes. Continue pulling till hands reach armpits and the elbows are close to the side of the body. Lowering heels, relax grip.

Keeping the knees straight, grasp with both hands an imaginary weight at the left side of the foot. With hard pull lift slowly, keeping hands

close to the side of the body. Then push overhead as high as possible. Repeat on right side.

With feet apart and knees straight, join hands (arms stretched) over head. Strike them down swiftly and with vigour between legs till upper parts of the arms touch thighs.

Place two chairs about eighteen inches apart. Put hand on each. Dive between till head nearly touches floor. Then lift upwards slowly with face looking back as far as possible on the ceiling.

Sit sideways on a chair; toes under bed or box, Rigid from the waist up, bend back very slowly till head touches floor. Then, lift slowly. At the beginning strain should be lessened by holding back of the chair with one hand. After sufficient practice, arms may be folded behind back during exercise.

Stretch arms full length over head, at the same time joining hands. Lunge to the left, reaching floor. Recover and lunge to the right.

Slowly, and with steady strain, bend the head sideways till ear touches right shoulder. Reverse process. Then bend head till it touches chest, then backwards as far as possible.

Indulge in imaginary woodchopping. Knees straight; imaginary log between feet.

Make a circle with the head, bringing the head as nearly horizontal as possible. To prevent dizziness, reverse process.

Lie flat on back; arms and feet straight. Raise legs slowly to right angle with the floor, then lower. Knees straight throughout; feet together.

It might be objected that one has no time for these exercises. Neglect of physical culture might mean that sooner or later we may be forced to go in quest of some mountain clime or seaside air, there

to spend many a fleeting day in search of rest and health. Neglect might mean that we may go through this world like a shadow darkening the lives of others—for a weak and unpleasant character is often the result of an undeveloped, badly-trained body. But if we gain physical fitness? Then, in our own lives we shall radiate happiness. Ever bearing insult and misfortune with equanimity we shall look upon the bright side of things. Those coming in contact with us will be better and more cheerful for it; and we ourselves shall go forth working steadily, every ounce of energy a working ounce for Him of Whom it was said: "He hath done all things well."

Some Press Comments

"A simple diagnosis and a simple remedy are what, in his useful little book, the Rev. P. J. Gearon provides for a common and painful spiritual malady."—
—The Month.

"The doctrine is sound and safe. . . The writer is filled with sympathy and pity for the sufferers for whom he writes. . . . The book should help confessors and directors."
—English Messenger of the Sacred Heart.

"Those who are bothered by scruples and those who are called upon to direct the scrupulous will find SCRUPLES: WORDS OF CONSOLATION comforting and helpful. *The treatment of the subject is original* and practical, the style dignified and graceful. As its sub-title indicates, the book is full of words of consolation for those who are victims of scruples. The author speaks as one having authority and with the conviction that the truth of his statements is borne out by his experience in handling a great number of scrupulous souls."*—America.*

"Father Gearon must be an ideal confessor for scrupulous people. It would be nowise surprising if his confessional were beseiged by persons of troubled and timorous conscience. His book shows that he is uncommonly patient and sympathetic towards such souls, who are the despair of the ordinary confessor. To the average busy confessor, indeed, the ways and views of such people seem irritating and unreasonable. Not so to Father Gearon, who seems to have made a niche for himself as the *apostle of the scrupulous.*

SOME PRESS COMMENTS

"Thanks to a single clever and ingenious principle, to which he adheres right through this volume, Father Gearon is able to find balm in Gilead for every variety of scrupulous soul. His book will appeal to priests and nuns and devout people, especially to those who have a tendency towards scrupulosity, or who have to deal with persons afflicted by scruples

" The value of the book is further enhanced by a luminous criticism of 'private revelations' (pp. 74-88.)"

—Irish Rosary.

" In his book he shows very plainly how to *change the glasses.* It is worth while reading this most instructive book."—*The Imeldist.*

"Father Gearon takes a new and extremely comforting view point in the treatment of this important matter. . . . His work can be recommended unhesitatingly. . . ."

Canadian Messenger of the Sacred Heart.

" Souls that find nothing but anxiety and interior disquiet in their quest of God will gladly welcome the volume. If they read this book carefully, they need search no further."—*Catholic World.*

" Priests will find a somewhat original and highly instructive treatise. . . . We recommend it to physician and patient alike."—*Ave Maria.*

" A really valuable contribution towards the solution of so difficult a problem."—*Pax.*

" We have nothing but admiration for this delightful volume."—*Limerick Leader.*

" The treatise is, indeed, a standard work which cannot be neglected by anyone who is anxious to know the working of the scrupulous mind."

—Sunday Independent.

" Excellent treatise . . . never fails to take account of the intimate relation between body and soul."

—Irish Times.

" Here is undoubtedly one of the big spiritual books of the season—one which will be eagerly read . . . by all classes without distinction, for a more human book we have never perused.

" The work is so clear and so simple and its treatment so practical that it cannot be other than a favourite. It has a thoroughness, a literary charm all its own, and seems to be head and shoulders above anything written on the subject. Verily, it is just the book that confessors will be only too anxious to place in the hands of their scrupulous penitents.

" Readers, no matter how unsympathetic they may be towards the scrupulous, cannot resist the force of the author's able exposition. They must see the justice of his claims and the logic of his conclusions.

" In an admirable and *most indispensable section* of the book, the Reverend author deals with ' Viewpoints other than ours.' . . . A casual reader may regard this section as containing many a repetition, but the well-trained, mature intellect of the writer saw the necessity of doing all the thinking for the scrupulous by not leaving any possible objection unanswered.

" Unless we are surprised, it will be the standard work on Scruples not only in the English tongue, but also in any language into which at may be translated; and, unless we are more surprised, it will lead to marvellous results best known to God and to the scrupulous themselves."

—*Dublin Evening Herald.*

" This is an altogether admirable book on an admittedly difficult subject.

" We wish for it the widest possible circulation, and that it may be the means of bringing peace to many troubled souls."

—*The Poor Soul's Friend.*

" This is a gracefully written plea, free from technicalities, for understanding and sympathy in dealing with scrupulous persons. . . . We commend this consoling book both to the scrupulous and to confessors."

—*Catholic Gazette.*

"This little volume . . . in the course of a few months has had a large sale. It deserves this attention because it treats a difficult subject well and practically. . . . It will be helpful to both the scrupulous and the directors."

—J. J. Walsh, M.D., etc., in *The Commonweal.*

"That the writer of this treatise, ... after much genuine success on these lines, should think it useful to record his experiences, seems to us a wise inspiration. He describes his method in words so sympathetic and lucid that we can without hesitation recommend what he has written, not only to the scrupulous but to all interested in keeping their minds free from imaginary worries."—*Irish Monthly.*

"What Tallyrand said to a young author, that 'in his book were many things new, and many things good, but the good things were not new, and the new things were not good,' I can reverse in reviewing this fine book . . . . It should bring joy to the scrupulous, great light to priests in this difficult matter of ministering to minds diseased. Young priests, novice masters and mistresses should study this book to aid them in what is and always must be—the direction of the scrupulous, the cure of scruples."—E. J. Q., in *Irish Independent.*

"This is, indeed, a remarkable book . . . . extremely practical, tersely written and eminently sympathetic towards the scrupulous. The vast amount of new thought couched in gracious form, the extensive learning and solid judgment displayed in every page, all combine to make the book a masterpiece of ascetical literature. A most important and indispensable portion of the book is, 'Viewpoints other than ours.' . . . . It is, verily, a golden treasury of sympathy and piety."—*Catholic Book Notes.*

"The author takes a new viewpoint in this important matter. Those who have found no relief, no light elsewhere, will assuredly find in his work abundance of consolation. It is a work which has already found a firm place in literature for its simple, yet glowing, style, and its easy though profound treatment."—*Irish News.*

"Here is a work which we heartily recommend to our readers, for the subject is important, and its treatment is original. Dr. Gearon has done a great service. One of the best spiritual productions of recent times." —*The Cross.*

"This charming book—clearly the outcome of keen observation and deep thinking—will be received with delight by the scrupulous. It is the work of a master-hand, and is essentially a new book. . . . . It is without a doubt, the best thing in English on the subject. . . . . It is, verily, a human book, written in a genial, fatherly spirit of helpfulness by one who thoroughly understands the difficulties of the scrupulous."—*Irish Catholic.*

"This treatise would be sufficient to make the author famous as a Scruple specialist. . . . . The author speaks from out of a full and sincere heart, revealing intense conviction in every line. He speaks with sympathy for and understanding of the scrupulous penitent's difficulties."—*St. Anthony's Annals.*

"There is a touch of genius running through this remarkable book, something that lifts it above the trite and commonplace. . . . . Dr. Gearon's graceful style, his sincerity of expression, his persuasiveness carry the reader along with never a pause. This book is a veritable gem . . . . and must remain a standard authority on the subject of Scruples."—*Cork Examiner.*

"It is clearly the work of a specialist. Distinguished alike for its piety, dignity, literary charm, and commonsense, it is evidently a labour of love."—*Connaught Tribune.*

"It is well abreast of anything written on the subject. It is a book with a human vein running through it from the first line to the last. You will want to read it through at a sitting, and you will come back to it again for its sheer delight."—*An Phoblacht.*

"A more valuable contribution to ascetical literature we have never seen. . . . . This book is gentle; it is persuasive; it is a work of high interest and accurate scholarship. . . . . Its stately flow of language, its

sweet and solemn thoughts lend a charm to the book, and make it a piece of literature whose sublimity is of the highest order."—*Leader.*

"It is apparently modern in its treatment of that affliction and its psychology is in keeping with the trend of current scientific thought, especially in regard to the conflicts and repressions. Consequently it is a book which should be on the shelves of both medical man and priest, because here is a morbid process which affects equally body and soul.

"The style of the book is lucid, illuminating, and a model of accuracy. It presents the logical sequence of a mathematical exposition, brightened by inimitable flashes of rhetoric."—*Southern Cross,* Adelaide.

"The writer concisely, clearly and gracefully deals with the various questions connected with scruples and their cure."—*Catholic Press,* Sydney.

"We have received the above, and can recommend it heartily to priests and to souls troubled with that bane of the spiritual life—*viz.,* scrupulosity. Father Gearon has treated this difficult subject in a manner becoming a learned and devout theologian. He betrays a tender sympathy with the scrupulous soul, and the manual contains practical suggestions and most useful advice for the afflicted."—*Tribune,* Melbourne.

"The book is worthy of the attention not only of persons who are troubled by scruples, but also of directors of conscience."—*Freeman's Journal,* Sydney.

"All will admit that Dr. Gearon treats every question in his admirable book sympathetically." *Annals of Our Lady,* Sydney.

"No happier title could have been chosen."—*St. Joseph's Garland,* Sydney.

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